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IndiGo appoints William Walsh as Chief Executive Officer

MUMBAI: William Walsh has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of IndiGo. The decision is subject to security clearance from the ministry of civil aviation.

Walsh currently serves as Director General of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and has previously led major airlines, including British Airways and International Airlines Group. His career spans leadership roles



William Walsh across global aviation, including Aer Lingus.

Announcing the appointment, IndiGo chairman Vikram Singh Mehta

said: "I am thrilled that Willie will be at helm of IndiGo. He is an exceptional global aviation leader with a stellar track record. His experience in managing large scale airline operations and navigating complex market dynamics make him ideally suited to strengthen and lead IndiGo for continued growth."

Management indicated that Walsh will oversee overall operations and (Cont. on page - 2)

Vir Vikram Yadav heads DGCA

NEW DELHI: The Centre has appointed Vir Vikram Yadav as the new Director General of the DGCA, replacing Faiz Ahmed Kidwai, as part of a major bureaucratic reshuffle. Yadav, currently Additional Secretary in the environment ministry, will head the aviation regulator amid rising air traffic and safety focus. Kidwai has been moved to DoPT.

Yadav, who is currently serving as Additional Sec-



Vir Vikram Yadav retary in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, will now head India's aviation regulator at a time when the sector is expanding rapidly. With rising air traffic, growing airline fleets and increased focus on safety, his role is expected to be crucial in ensuring stronger regulatory oversight.

The reshuffle comes at a critical juncture for the aviation sector. The DGCA is closely monitoring airline safety, fleet expansion, airport infrastructure and compliance with regulations as both domestic (Cont. on page - 6)

DOMESTIC AIRLINES SPARED

Jet fuel prices doubled to Rs 2.07 lakh per kilolitre

NEW DELHI: Price of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) or jet fuel, was more than doubled to a record Rs 2.07 lakh per kilolitre (one kilolitre is equal to 1000 litres) but domestic airlines will not have to pay the steep increase as a mechanism is on works to shield them.

Alongside, commercial LPG rates were raised by Rs 195.50 per cylinder, mir-

roring the surge in global oil prices linked to the widening West Asia conflict.

ATF price in Delhi was hiked by Rs 110,703.08 per kilolitre or 114.5pc to Rs 207,341.22 per kl, according to state-owned fuel retailers.

ATF being a completely deregulated product is priced at prevailing benchmark international prices.

This is as per a written understanding with the airlines. So the new rates will apply for any international airline refuelling in India from Wednesday, industry sources said. Domestic airlines will however not have to pay the steep rates as a mechanism is in works to not pass on the entire burden on to them, they said.

It wasn't immediately

known how much will domestic airlines have to pay and how much will be absorbed in some other form. No formal announcement of the mechanism has been made so far. This is the first time ever that the ATF price has crossed Rs 2 lakh per kl mark. The previous peak was in 2022 when rates were hiked to (Cont. on page - 2)

TAFI unveils commemorative logo to celebrate 40 years

NEW DELHI: The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) has unveiled a special commemorative logo to mark its 40th anniversary (1986-2026), highlighting its legacy and continued commitment to India's travel and tourism industry.

The newly introduced visual identity prominently features the motto "40 Years of Trust & Travel", symbolising the federa-

tion's longstanding contribution to strengthening the travel trade ecosystem in India.

Designed to reflect TAFI's evolution over four decades, the logo incorporates four distinct stars, each representing a key phase in the organisation's journey.

Each star in the commemorative logo signifies a milestone decade:



1986-1996: The foundation phase, when TAFI established itself as a unified

voice for Indian travel professionals.

*1996-2006: A period of rapid expansion and increasing influence across the national travel landscape.

*2006-2016: A decade marked by resilience, navigating global tourism shifts and economic challenges.

*2016-2026: The current era driven by innova-

tion, digital adoption and a strong focus on member empowerment. TAFI stated that the new logo is not just a tribute to its past achievements but also a reflection (Cont. on page - 2)

HOLIDAY NOTICE

Friday, 3rd April, 2026, being Good Friday, our offices will remain closed on that day.

HOLY GOOD FRIDAY

Remember His Sacrifice





April brings changes

April 1 is no more a "Fools' Day". This year it marks landmark changes for Indians. A new financial year begins from April 1 and India introduces major changes including a new tax law, zero tax up to Rs 12 lakh income, stricter PAN rules, higher ATM charges and revised train ticket refunds. Fuel prices may also change. These updates will directly impact daily expenses and financial planning. Overall, around 10 key rules will directly affect the daily lives of common people.

Under the new tax regime, individuals earning up to Rs 12 lakh annually will not have to pay any income tax. This benefit comes from an increased rebate under Section 87A, giving relief to middle-income earners. From April 1, Form 16 and Form 16A will be replaced by new Form 130 and Form 131. The timeline for issuing these forms will also change.



The new Income Tax Act revamps tax framework with higher exemptions for salaried individuals, including HRA, education, meals and gifts, while keeping tax rates unchanged. The IT Department has tightened PAN card rules. Aadhaar card alone will no longer be accepted as proof of date of birth. Applicants must now provide additional documents such as a Class 10 certificate or passport. Our railways revises cancellation rules, stricter refunds and flexible boarding change. LPG cylinder prices may change (after the assembly elections in some states) as prices are reviewed at the start of every month. Prices of CNG, PNG may also be revised, which can affect daily transport costs. Banks have updated ATM rules. HDFC Bank will include UPI ATM withdrawals in the free limit, but after five transactions, a charge of Rs 23 will apply per transaction. Bandhan Bank will allow three free transactions in metro cities and five in non-metro cities, after which charges will apply. Punjab National Bank has reduced debit card withdrawal limits for some cards. The limit will now range between Rs 50,000 and Rs 75,000, down from the earlier Rs 1 lakh, affecting large cash withdrawals. Railways has made cancellation rules stricter. If a ticket is cancelled within eight hours after the train departs, no refund will be given. Earlier, this window was shorter. If tickets are cancelled eight to 24 hours before departure, only 50pc refund will be given. For cancellations 24 to 72 hours before, 25pc will be deducted. If cancelled more than 72 hours before, standard charges will apply.

The tax reform expands benefits to more cities but introduces stricter compliance, detailed disclosures and a new Form 130 system to improve transparency.

Multiple income tax exemption limits are set to be increased under the new rules, particularly benefiting individuals opting for the old tax regime. One of the key changes pertains to House Rent Allowance (HRA). Currently, taxpayers residing in metro cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai can claim exemption of up to 50pc of their basic salary, while those in other cities are eligible for 40pc. Under the revised framework, cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune and Ahmedabad have also been included in the higher 50pc exemption category, thereby expanding relief to a wider urban population.

The new act also provides for a substantial increase in exemptions related to children's education.

LIPSYNCH

"Like death, income tax is certain".

— Benjamin Franklin

INDIGO'S KOLKATA-SHANGHAI FLIGHTS

New era for India-China tourism, business

KOLKATA: For the first time in over five years, the air above the Bay of Bengal and the East China Sea is buzzing with a renewed sense of purpose. On March 29, 2026, India's largest carrier, IndiGo, officially launched its daily, non-stop service between Kolkata and Shanghai.

This isn't just another pin on a route map. It is a vi-



tal aerial bridge connecting India's cultural capital with China's global financial powerhouse. At a time when the world's two most populous nations are re-

calibrating their diplomatic and economic ties, this flight represents more than just a seat on a plane—it's a catalyst for a multi-billion dollar exchange of goods, ideas, and people.

Operating the fuel-efficient Airbus A320neo, IndiGo has timed this route to suit the modern business traveller. The red-eye schedule allows executives to finish a day's work in

(Cont. on page - 6)

Delhi-Ludhiana direct flight from May 15

LUDHIANA: The much-awaited direct flights between Delhi and Halwara (Ludhiana) will begin from May 15, Union Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Bittu said.

Calling the development as a "proud moment for Punjab", Bittu posted on X: "Punjab Takes Flight, New Journeys Begin! A big boost to connectivity, convenience and growth for Punjab. The skies just got closer!"

He said the commencement of commercial operations at Halwara Airport's newly built civil terminal (inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi) is expected to significantly enhance travel convenience for res-

idents and businesses in Ludhiana — Punjab's industrial hub — while promoting trade and economic activity in the region.

(Cont. from page - 1)

TAFI unveils commemorative...

(Cont. from page - 1) of its future direction. The federation emphasised its ongoing mission to empower the travel community and guide the industry towards its next phase of growth.

The tagline-- "The Way Forward" underscores TAFI's vision to lead the industry through evolving market dynamics, technological advancements and changing traveller expectations. With four decades of experience, TAFI continues to play a pivotal role in shaping India's travel and tourism sector.

The federation remains focused on fostering collaboration, advocating

IndiGo appoints William...

(Cont. from page - 1) strategic direction. His role will include strengthening operational performance, expanding network strategy and enhancing customer experience as the airline enters a new growth phase.

The appointment aligns with IndiGo's transformation journey, as it aims to scale further in domestic and international markets. Walsh is expected to join after July 31, 2026, bringing global expertise to

for the interests of travel agents and unlocking new opportunities in both domestic and international markets.

As it celebrates this milestone, TAFI is poised to build on its legacy while driving innovation and growth for its extensive network of travel professionals across the country.

Jet fuel prices doubled to Rs 2.07...

(Cont. from page - 1) Rs 1.1 lakh per kl after oil prices surged after Russia invaded Ukraine. This is the second monthly increase in rates. Prices on March 1 were hiked by 5.7pc (Rs 5,244.75 per kl). The rising prices will fur-

guide the airline through evolving industry dynamics. The leadership transition reflects IndiGo's focus on strengthening its position in a competitive and rapidly growing aviation market Walsh's appointment comes at a "pivotal cusp of growth", adding that he brings "a rare combination of global perspective, operational expertise and a values driven leadership", according to IndiGo MD, Rahul Bhatia. Walsh is widely regarded as one of the most influential leaders in global aviation, with a career spanning over four decades.

He has previously served as CEO of Aer Lingus (2000-2005), British Airways (2005-2011), and International Airlines Group (IAG) from 2011 to 2020, where he led key mergers and restructuring initiatives. He has headed IATA since 2020.

ther strain airlines which are already burning more fuel in taking longer routes for flying to western destinations because of closure of airspace due to the war. Fuel makes up for around 40 per cent of an airline's operating cost.

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FOREX RATES
As on 2nd April 2026 (In rupees)

Currency	Bill Buy	Bill Sell
US Dollar	92.28	93.5
British Pound	121.97	123.73
Euro	106.12	108.38
Japanese Yen	57.82	58.74
Swiss Franc (CHF)	114.99	117.56
Canadian Dollar	66.01	67.51
Australian Dollar	63.29	64.67
Norwegian Krone	9.37	9.65
Swedish Krona	9.62	9.9
New Zealand Dollar	52.47	53.63
Hong Kong Dollar	11.62	11.98
Kuwaiti Dinar	310.1628	287.5245
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FlyCreative launches Global visa Unit



KODUNGALLUR: FlyCreative marked a significant milestone with the official launch of its Global Visa Division at the Regional Headquarters in Kodungallur. The inauguration was led by Director Seniya Abdulkareem, highlighting a proud moment in the organization's journey of over 45 years in the travel and tourism industry. This new division reflects FlyCreative's continued commitment to growth and service excellence. Building on its long-standing reputation and deep-rooted expertise, the company is now positioned to provide comprehensive visa assistance services. The Global Visa Division aims to deliver seamless, efficient, and reliable solutions to meet the evolving needs of travelers. With this expansion, FlyCreative strengthens its mission of connecting people across borders and enabling travel aspirations and deep-rooted aspirations. The initiative underscores the company's dedication to innovation while maintaining the trust and legacy it has built over decades. FlyCreative continues to move forward with a clear vision - empowering journeys and making global travel more accessible for its clients.



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GULF FAQs

Will court consider my side agreement?

Two months ago, I established a company with one person, along with a local partner who was stipulated to pay 51pc of the capital as per the law and the remaining capital to be paid equally by me and the other partner.

We ratified the Memorandum of Association for the company, but after it was completed, the partner told me that due to financial problem, the bank rejected his application for loan and therefore, he could not pay his percentage. I need him to run the company due to his experience and he said in future he will pay his percentage and requested me to pay his share along with my share for the company capital. My questions are;



If I make a side agreement where I mention the actual percentage for each partner, would this mean such agree-

ment is legal, since it is against an officially ratified agreement? In case of dispute, will the side agreement be con-

sidered in court? Can I protect my right with such an agreement? Is it possible to ratify the side agreement?

I would like to advise the questioner to amend the ratified Memorandum of Association of the company by removing the partner from the company since he did not pay his share value in the capital. If, however, he pays in future, the questioner can then amend the Memorandum of Association and his name can be mentioned in

the memorandum at that time.

As for the side agreement, the competent court may accept the same, but it cannot be ratified before the notary public.

Therefore, in case the questioner does not want to amend the Memorandum of Association, in that case I would advise him to prepare such agreement through the legal offices and have it signed by witnesses as well, in order to be legally drafted and protected.

Withholding passport, is it legal?

Does my employer have the right to withhold my passport and deprive me from travelling on vacation?

Keeping the passport of the worker is not allowed whatever be the relation-

ship between the two parties. The Dubai Cassation Court has clearly stated that it is not permitted for the employer to keep the passport of the worker and to deprive him or her of the right of travelling and mov-

ing, whatever be the nature of relationship between the two parties. The Cassation Court has elaborated that withholding a passport is a practice which reveals the employer's intention to prevent the worker from

travelling. Cases of banning a worker from travelling is governed by Article No. 329 of the Civil Procedures Law which also stipulates that it is necessary to obtain a court order with regard to ban travel.

Can notice period be waived by my company?

I worked in a company for more than two years under a contract for unlimited period; I submitted my resignation to transfer to a new company with better salary and benefits. But the problem is the notice period mentioned in my labour contract is for three months. I asked the employer to exempt me from working within such period provided

I waive my three-month salary plus my three months' bonus. I used to get my bonus every three months to be deducted from my end-of-service gratuity. My employer rejected the suggestion. If I work within this period, I might lose the opportunity to join the new company. My questions here are -- Is the employee as per UAE labour law legally obliged

to work within the notice period? If the employee does not work what is the penalty? Can the notice period be increased for more than 30 days according to the Labour Law? I was forced to sign the contract with this clause because at that time they told me it was the company policy and I would not be taken on board if I did not agree to this clause?

and shall terminate only on expiry of that period. The worker shall be entitled in respect of the notice period to full pay, calculated on the basis of his last wage and shall continue to perform his duties during that period if the employer so requests. The Parties may not agree to waive the notice requirement or to reduce the notice period; however, they may agree to extend the period".

ing expert whose report formed the basis of the ruling. The verdict is seen as a significant precedent in regulating the relationship between customers and banking institutions in the UAE, particularly in cases involving entities within the same banking group. The court firmly upheld the principle that a customer's bank account enjoys independent legal protection and cannot be used to settle other liabilities without clear and express consent.



I would like to clarify to the questioner that article no. 118 of the UAE Federal Labour Law No. 8 of 1980 states the following: "A contract shall subsist throughout the notice period referred to in the preceding Article

The Abu Dhabi commercial Court of Appeal has upheld a lower court ruling ordering a national bank to refund Dh365,836.23 to a customer after it was proven that funds were deducted and transferred from his account to another bank without his explicit prior authorisation.

In a final judgment that is no longer subject to appeal, the court also ordered the bank to bear legal costs, affirming the findings of a court-appointed bank-

According to legal counsel Mohammed Al Hais, who represented the claimant, the case dated back to when the customer obtained a personal finance facility under a Murabaha agreement from a national bank worth Dh870,115.84. The agreement stipulated repayment over 48 monthly instalments of Dh18,127 each, supported by a security cheque covering the total amount.

Saudi Haj minister holds meetings for pilgrims' services

MADINAH: Minister for Haj and Umrah Tawfiq Al-Rabiah held a series of meetings with representatives of countries, official delegations and local and international entities and companies involved in the Umrah and visitation ecosystem. These meetings were held on the sidelines of the third edition of the Umrah and Ziyarah Forum, held at the King Salman International Convention Centre in Madinah, with

broad participation from decision-makers and Umrah service providers.

During his meetings with country representatives, the minister affirmed that the directives of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman emphasised exerting all efforts and deliv-

ering high-quality services to care for the Two Holy Mosques and their visitors, in line with Saudi Vision 2030.

The meetings reviewed ways to enhance joint co-operation to improve and develop service quality, address operational challenges and co-ordinate efforts between the Kingdom and all countries



to facilitate arrival procedures.

He also stressed the Kingdom's commitment to building strategic partnerships with various countries to strengthen integration across services and elevate co-ordination in areas such as transportation, visas, awareness and digital services. In the same context, the minister

met with representatives of Saudi Umrah companies to align operational priorities and directions, discuss field challenges and proposed solutions to improve performance, enhance service quality and improve the experience of Umrah pilgrims and visitors, as well as strengthen communication channels and ongoing co-ordination.

Oman govt takes over SalamAir, airlines to operate separately



MUSCAT: Oman has taken a major step in reshaping its aviation sector by acquiring SalamAir, with a focus on strengthening connectivity, improving efficiency and supporting long-term economic growth.

The government of the Sultanate of Oman has confirmed the completion of its acquisition of SalamAir, making it clear that both Oman Air and SalamAir will continue to operate as fully independent

brands. Each airline will retain its operational identity, fleets and services, ensuring continuity in how they operate and serve passengers.

The move is aimed at improving co-ordination between the two carriers without merging them. Minister of Transport Eng. Said bin Hamoud Al Maawali said the strategy focuses on reducing overlap in destination networks, allowing for

better route planning and more efficient use of aircraft across both airlines. He explained that optimising fleet utilisation and expanding air connectivity within Oman and across the wider region are central to the plan. By aligning networks more effectively, the government expects to strengthen the aviation system while maintaining the distinct roles of both carriers. Al Maawali added that this approach will enhance operational efficiency and provide travellers with broader options, along with greater diversity across the two economic categories served by Oman Air and SalamAir.

Vir Vikram Yadav heads DGCA

(Cont. from page - 1) and international air travel continue to grow. The regulator plays a key role in maintaining air safety standards, issuing licences and ensuring operational efficiency across the aviation ecosystem.

Meanwhile, Puneet Kansal has been named Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation, while Mona K Khandar has been appointed Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

(Cont. from page - 2) Kolkata and wake up ready for meetings in the Lujiazui financial district.

The launch follows a year of resurgent economic links. In the 2025-26 fiscal year, exports from West Bengal to China have seen a significant uptick. This new direct link is expected to be a game-changer for several key industries:

Kolkata's famous prawns and seafood can now reach Shanghai's high-end markets in hours rather than days. Specialised leather from the Bengal region and textiles now have a faster route to Chinese

manufacturers and retail hubs. Shanghai, being a global innovation hub, can now easily export essential components directly into India's eastern gateway.

"This route is a strategic necessity," says Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales at IndiGo.

"Shanghai is one of the world's leading commercial centres. By linking it to Kolkata, we are facilitating a smoother flow of bilateral trade and cultural exchange."

While the flight originates in Kolkata, its impact ripples across the entire Indian sub-continent.

Nusuk app reaches over 51m users globally

MADINAH: Minister of Haj and Umrah Tawfiq Al-Rabiah announced that the Nusuk app has surpassed 51 million users worldwide.

The announcement was made during his speech at the opening session of the third edition of the Umrah and Ziyarah Forum at King Salman International Convention Center in Madinah. The three-day event witnesses wide local and international participation. Nusuk, developed by the Ministry of Haj and Umrah, provides over 130 digital services to help pil-



grims plan their journey from issuing Umrah permits and booking visits to Al-Rawdah Al-Sharifah, to checking crowd density and accessing support, improving the overall experience and satisfaction of visitors.

New era for India-China tourism, business

IndiGo has synchronised its domestic schedule to allow passengers from Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Pune, Jaipur and Bhubaneswar to connect to Shanghai with a single, seamless stop in Kolkata.

This positioning turns Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport into a primary transit hub for east-bound international travel, rivalling traditional stopovers like Singapore or Bangkok for speed and cost-effectiveness. Beyond the balance sheets, there

is a deep-rooted historical connection between these two cities. As noted by Pratik Mathur, the Indian Consul General in Shanghai, Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore visited Shanghai three times between 1913 and 1931, fostering a literary and cultural bond that survives to this day.

In 2026, this flight makes "people-to-people" ties a reality again. For the Indian diaspora in China and Chinese professionals in India, the gruelling 12-hour multi-stop journeys through third-party countries are over.