



OVERSEAS NEWS AND EMPLOYMENT

PASSPORT TO GLOBAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES



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IndiGo strengthens Puducherry connectivity with more flights to Bengaluru, Hyderabad

CHENNTAI: IndiGo has enhanced its services in neighbouring Puducherry, operating 14 flights a week and boosting regional connectivity.

"The enhanced air connectivity has supported Puducherry's development across multiple sectors. Improved access to Bengaluru and Hyderabad has enabled residents to travel more efficiently for special-



ised healthcare and higher education," IndiGo added.

The airline began operations from Puducherry on Dec 20, 2024, marking one year of service to

the Union Territory. "As of Dec 2025, it operates 14 flights per week from Puducherry connecting the city with Bengaluru and Hyderabad," the company said.

IndiGo also highlighted the broader benefits of its services, noting: "The air service has also enabled onward connectiv-

ity for passengers from Puducherry travelling across India and also to overseas destinations."

Over the past year, the airline's operations have provided "regular and reliable air connectivity from Puducherry, addressing travel needs in a region where scheduled air services were limited." The release further pointed out that "the introduction of consistent commercial flights has improved accessibility and brought greater ease to air travel for residents, students, professionals and tourists."

In-flight use of power banks to charge devices banned

NEW DELHI: India's aviation regulator, the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), has said that the use of power banks for charging mobile phones or other gadgets during flights has been banned. The fresh rules also say that power banks cannot be used for charging devices, including through aircraft seat power outlets. The new norms come after several incidents of lithium batter-

(Cont. on page - 6)

Sadaf Choudhary takes charge as Indian Haj Consul in Jeddah

JEDDAH: In a historic first, an Indian woman Foreign Service (IFS) officer has assumed charge as the Haj Consul at the Indian Consulate in Jeddah.



Ms Sadaf Choudhary, a 2021-batch IFS officer, has taken over as Consul for Haj and Commerce, marking a significant milestone in India's diplomatic engagement related to Haj affairs.

Choudhary succeeds Mohammed Abdul Jaleel, a native of Kannur, who has been transferred to the MEA in New Delhi, where he is currently serving as Secretary in charge of the Bangladesh-Myanmar Desk. Prior to her posting in Jeddah, Choudhary served as Head of Chancery at the Indian Consulate in Marseille, France.

As Haj Consul, Choudhary will play a key role in the preliminary preparations for the 2026 Haj pilgrimage for Indian pilgrims, working closely with the Indian ambassador and the Consul General of India in Jeddah. In addition to Haj affairs, she has also been entrusted with the com-

(Cont. on page - 2)

Kuwait expats can stay abroad for only up to six months

KUWAIT CITY: There's a major shift in policy which is going to affect thousands of foreign residents in Kuwait, including Indians.. Yes, the country has now kept the maximum time that an expat can stay abroad to six months. This comes under the new residency rules as authorities introduce long-term visa options for retaining skilled workers and investors.

The change is a part of the government's wider push for reforming residency and population management policies. As it happens, the new ex-

ecutive regulations come under the ministerial resolution No. 2249 of 2025. This aims to reshape how expatriates manage their

residency status. According to the court provision, expats who have a valid resident permit cannot remain

(Cont. on page - 2)

UAE reduces age of majority to 18 years from 21

ABU DHABI: The UAE government has issued a new law regarding civil transactions and reducing the age of majority from 21 lunar years to 18 Gregorian years.

The new law aims to establish a comprehensive and integrated legal framework — shifting the way civil transactions are

regulating in the country. The new law represents a pivotal legislative milestone. It is part of the national legislative trajectory focused on modernising the legal framework. It adopts a practical approach that simplifies the understanding of legal provisions, unifies legal

(Cont. on page - 2)

Amazon allows H-1B employees stranded in India to work remotely till March

NEW DELHI: Making a departure from its strict return-to-office rule, Amazon has allowed certain H-1B visa holders stranded in India to work remotely until March 2, 2026, according to a report by Business Insider. The temporary arrangement, outlined in an internal memo, responds to widespread delays in US visa processing that have left employees unable to

return to the US.

Under Amazon's normal policy, staff travelling abroad for visa renewals can work remotely for up to 20 business days. The new authorisation extends this period by several months, but only for employees who were physically in India as of Dec 13, 2025 and are awaiting rescheduled H-1B or H-4 visa slots.

Despite the extension,

Amazon has imposed significant restrictions on the work these employees can undertake while in India. According to the internal memo and reports, affected staff:

*Cannot code, troubleshoot, test or document software, effectively sidelining core technical duties.

*May not interact with customers, partners or

vendors, including pricing or contract discussions.

*Are barred from making strategic decisions, team management or final approvals.

*Cannot visit or work from Amazon offices or sites in India.

*Must perform all permitted tasks from residential or other non-Amazon locations.

The memo states that

"all reviews, final decision making and sign-offs should be undertaken outside India," emphasising that these restrictions are designed to comply with local laws and internal compliance requirements.

The move comes against the backdrop of extended H-1B visa appointment backlogs, which have been exacerbated by new US

(Cont. on page - 6)

Shravan Kumar Vishwakarma: a tempo driver from UP heads Shankh Air

NEW DELHI: He once drove a tempo through Kanpur's busy traffic, counting trips and fuel, not take-off slots. Today, Shravan Kumar Vishwakarma is preparing to launch an airline. In a sector ruled by giants and guarded by regulators, the rise of Shankh Air is less a startup story and more a reminder that in India, even the longest journeys can begin in the slow lane.

The idea that aviation is a closed club, dominated by legacy business houses and a handful of powerful players, is being tested from an unexpected corner of UP. Shravan Kumar is preparing for take-off.

Shankh Air is likely to begin flight operations in the first half of January



Shravan Kumar Vishwakarma with Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu

with an initial fleet of three Airbus aircraft, connecting Lucknow with Delhi, Mumbai and other metro cities. The airline will also operate flights to destinations across Uttar Pradesh in its first phase, with two more aircraft expected to join the fleet within the next

one-and-a-half months.

"At present, the fleet size is limited, but as it grows, we will cover the entire country," Vishwakarma told a TV channel, adding that international operations are planned for 2028 or 2029.

Crucially, the airline has

already secured a NOC from the Union civil aviation ministry, clearing a major regulatory hurdle. Earlier this week, two other carriers, Al Hind Air and FlyExpress, also received their NOCs, signalling the government's push to widen participation in India's fast-growing domestic aviation market.

The approvals come at a time when concerns over limited competition in domestic aviation have sharpened, with market share heavily concentrated among a few players.

At 35, Vishwakarma's journey is far removed from the usual aviation success story. According to a Jagranreport, he was born into a middle-class family in Kanpur and showed little interest in academics. For years, ambition took a back seat to survival.

"In the circumstances we grew up, just earning a livelihood was seen as enough. Dreaming beyond that was almost unthinkable," he said.

Vishwakarma has been open about his early struggles. "I drove autos with acquaintances and tried a few small businesses, many of which failed," he said. By his own admission, he has not only travelled in tempos but driven them too. "A person coming from the bottom up sees everything -- bicycles, buses, trains, tempos -- everything," he said.

The turning point came in 2014 with his entry into the cement trade. From there, he steadily expanded into TMT steel, mining and transport.

Growth was incremental rather than explosive. Shankh Air will be operated by Shankh Aviation, whose aircraft are currently undergoing technical reviews and are being readied for delivery to India, the company said in a statement.

The airline plans to launch services early next year and scale up its fleet to 20-25 aircraft over the next two to three years.

Kuwait expats can stay abroad...

(Cont. from page - 1) outside Kuwait for over six consecutive months. Or else they risk losing their residency status.

This rule applies to most categories of residency unless there are some specific exemptions. Moreover, there are some important exemptions to the rules, which include foreign investors, property owners and children of Kuwaiti women. This means they can stay abroad longer, without affecting their residency. However, there is a separate rule for domestic workers who can stay outside of Kuwait for up to four months. This is unless an unofficial leave request is submitted through the relevant authorities.

The 15-year residency is reserved for foreign investors who meet the criteria of the foreign direct investment law. The 10-year residency is given to property owners and the children of Kuwaiti women. These long-term categories are exempt from six month travel limit. They allow high-value contributors and family members a more flexible way to travel without closing their status.

This comes after a recent development, which revealed that the residency permit's validity is now directly linked to the insurance coverage. If the insurance expires, the legal status also expires. Additionally, Kuwait also

launched new e-services for visas and residency procedures, making life a lot easier for expats, as it allows them to skip standing in long queues at government offices.

UAE reduces age of majority to 18 years...

(Cont. from page - 1) references and eliminates duplication with recently enacted special laws.

From a judicial perspective, the law expands the scope of judicial reasoning and grants courts broader discretion when referring to the principles of Islamic Sharia in cases where an applicable legislative provision is absent. Where no statutory rule exists, either explicitly or implicitly, the judge may refer to the principles of Islamic Sharia and select the solution that best achieves justice and public interest in accordance with the circumstances of each case, without being bound by a specific school of jurisprudence or one single Sharia doctrine.

This approach strengthens the role of the judiciary in keeping pace with societal developments. Sharia principles can now also be

applied in the absence of special legislation governing matters relating to persons of unknown parentage, missing persons and absentees.

The law has reorganised the rules governing usufructuary construction rights. It now requires the contract to be registered with the competent authority. It also introduces provisions governing the obligations of the holder of such rights and allows the parties to determine the duration thereof.

Under this law, financial assets in the UAE which belong to a foreigner with no heirs shall be designated as a charitable endowment, subject to supervision by the competent authority to ensure proper management and allocation. In addition, the new legislation introduced a new framework governing

assignment, including the assignment of rights and established provisions for the protection of possession through preventive actions aimed at halting new acts of encroachment before harm occurs.

The law adopts clearer legal concepts and reinforces individual legal capacity, protecting free will in legal acts and contracts. This approach balances empowering individuals to manage their legal and financial affairs with safeguarding them against exploitation or harm.

In the same context, the law lowers the age at which a minor may seek judicial authorisation to manage their assets from 18 Hijri years to 15 Gregorian years, in support of entrepreneurship and youth participation in economic activity within a clear and stable legal framework.

Sadaf Choudhary takes charge...

(Cont. from page - 1) merce portfolio, a responsibility earlier handled by Mohammed Hashim, who has since been transferred to the MEA. Meanwhile, Imam Mehdi Hussain has taken charge as Consul for Press, Information and Culture, in addition to serving as Head of Chancery at the Indian Consulate. Hussain has previ-

ously served at the Indian embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, bringing with him considerable diplomatic experience. The new appointments are expected to further strengthen the functioning of the Indian consulate in Jeddah, particularly in areas related to Haj management, trade, media co-ordination and cultural outreach.

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KUWAIT LEADING OIL AND GAS COMPANY REQUIRES
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Mechanical Engineer Bachelor's degree in Mechanical engineering with a minimum 10 years working experience related to the oil industry part of it, at least 5 years relevant experience in Mechanical & piping works in upstream / downstream oil industries area and shall be able to handle works independently.

Civil Engineer Bachelor's degree in civil engineering with a minimum 10 years working experience related to the oil industry part of it, at least 5 years relevant experience in Civil works like concrete casting, supports and Industrial painting works in upstream / downstream oil industries area.

QA/QC Engineer Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering at least 10 years of relevant experience in QA/QC activities involved in various structural welding works and painting works of Oil and Gas industries. Good experience in inspection of painting inspection, and piping works. Experience in preparation of painting procedures, inspection and test plans, welder qualification requirements, ASNT Level II certification for RT, MT and PT, experience in preparation of QC records and related documents.

Piping Supervisor Bachelor's degree/ Diploma in Mechanical Engineering with at least with 10 years of relevant experience in the field of mechanical construction and related piping works. He shall be familiar with relevant EHS standards applicable in the oil and gas industry.

Insulation Supervisor Diploma or Degree in Mechanical Engineering or equivalent. Minimum 7-10 years of experience in insulation supervision, with at least 2-3 years in oil & gas projects in Kuwait. Familiar with insulation types, installation methods, and fireproofing techniques. Working knowledge of international standards.

Scaffolding Supervisor Diploma in Mechanical Engineering. Certified Scaffolding Supervisor by a recognized body. Minimum 7-10 years of experience in scaffolding supervision, preferably in the oil & gas industry, with at least 2-3 years in Kuwait. Strong understanding of HSE practices in oil & gas construction environments.

Civil Surveyor Diploma or Degree in Civil Engineering / Surveying or equivalent technical qualification. Minimum 3-5 years of experience as a Civil Surveyor in oil & gas or industrial projects, preferably with experience in Kuwait. Proficient in using surveying instruments. Familiarity with international codes and standards related to civil construction and surveying.

Civil Supervisor Bachelor's degree/ Diploma in Civil Engineering with at least with 8 years of relevant experience in the field of civil construction/Building maintenance works. He shall be familiar with relevant EHS standards applicable in the oil and gas industry.

QA/QC Inspector -Painting Bachelor's degree/ diploma in Engineering with at least 10 years of Oil & Gas industrial experience.

QA/QC Inspector -Welding Bachelor's degree/ diploma in mechanical Engineering with at least 10 years of Oil & Gas industrial experience and worked as welding inspector for minimum 5 years. He shall be the Certified Welding Inspector.

Safety officer Bachelor's Degree (Mechanical/ Chemical/Civil), 3 years Degree (Maths/Physics/ Chemistry) or Diploma with 8 years of work experience of which 5 years shall be in Oil and Gas industry & 3 years from the date of Nebosh/Passout.

Quantity Surveyor: Diploma in Mechanical Engineering or certificate of surveying after completing a minimum of 2 yrs full time courses. In 5 yrs. of experience of working as a mechanical surveyor also including projects for pipeline construction in oil and gas industry.

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FOREX RATES		
As on 5th January 2026 (In rupees)		
Currency	Bill Buy	Bill Sell
US Dollar	89.68	90.85
British Pound	120.33	121.99
Euro	104.37	106.59
Japanese Yen	57.06	57.96
Swiss Franc (CHF)	112.38	114.8
Canadian Dollar	64.86	66.32
Australian Dollar	59.66	60.94
Norwegian Krone	8.78	9.04
Swedish Krona	9.59	9.86
New Zealand Dollar	51.33	52.45
Hong Kong Dollar	11.36	11.71
Kuwaiti Dinar	299.4526	281.7431
Singapore Dollar	69.29	70.85
Saudi Arabian Riyal	23.6	24.34
U A E Dirham	24.16	24.85

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Notice - Suspension of Application Submission and Delay of Collection

Dear Applicants and Trade Partners,

Please be informed that due to some technical issues, it has been informed by Consulate General that there will be no acceptance of online visa application and legalization application from 6th January 2026 (Tuesday) onwards till further notice.

The collection of passports with expected date of 31st December 2025 onwards will be delayed as well. We shall update on the notices once the submission and collection of passports will be resumed.

Applicants hurry to submit applications online could choose Centers of New Delhi or Kolkata for submission. Thank you for your cooperation. We are deeply sorry for the inconvenience.

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 Day 7: Departure

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WILL BE A RELIABLE INTERFACE BETWEEN JOB PROVIDERS AND JOB SEEKERS

Now, Renaissance Hotel in Goa

MUMBAI: Renaissance Hotels, part of Marriott Bonvoy's global portfolio of over 30 extraordinary hotel brands, has opened the Renaissance Goa Hotel.

This new address is thoughtfully designed for travellers drawn to authentic exploration, genuine connection and captivating local stories. Nestled within the lush Arpora valley with effortless access to North Goa's iconic beaches --- Baga, Anjuna and Vagator--- the hotel sits at the dynamic intersection of Goa's lively coast and the quieter, more rhythmic pulse of a valley retreat.

"The Renaissance Hotels brand is built on curiosity and the idea that travel is most rewarding when it truly connects guests to the distinct character and DNA of a destination," said Kiran Andicot, Senior Vice President, South Asia, Marriott International. "Goa has long captivated as one of India's most enduring leisure destinations, offering a lighthearted familiarity and an accessible choice for both planned getaways and spontaneous adventures. As we continue to expand our lifestyle portfolio across India, Goa remains central to our leisure growth strat-

egy, with a focus on neighbourhood-led experiences, innovative design and a style of exploration that today's travelers seek."

Night bazaars Perfectly positioned in North Goa, the hotel connects guests to the region's bustling beach life, energetic night bazaars, thrilling adventure excursions, eclectic cafés, and rich cultural touch points while still offering a serene sanctuary that feels worlds away from the everyday. Rooted in the textures and rhythm of tropical Goa, the hotel's design embraces nature's palette -- fluid, tactile, and full of quiet drama.



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GULF FAQs

Do you need an agent to rent out your home?

I am in the process of buying a townhouse in an affluent Dubai community. What are the rules for renting out the property? Do I have to do so through an agent? What are my rights and responsibilities? How does the process work?

In Dubai, there is no legal obligation to rent a property through a real estate agent, as per the emirate's land laws. However, if an agent is engaged, the agent/broker must be licensed by the Real Estate Regulatory Agency (Rera) in accordance with Bylaw No. (85) of 2006 Regulating the Real Estate Brokers Register in the Emirate of Dubai regulating the Real Estate Brokers Register.

Further, a property owner can lease their property once ownership is registered with the Dubai Land Department (DLD). The landlord-tenant relationship is governed by a written lease that clearly sets out the property details, purpose, lease term, rent, payment method and ownership information.

All such lease contracts and any amendments must



be registered with Rera to be legally valid.

This is in accordance with the Article-4 of the Law No. (33) of 2008 Amending Law No. (26) of 2007 Regulating the Relationship between Landlords and Tenants in the Emirate of Dubai:

1. The contractual relationship between a Landlord and a tenant will be regulated by a lease contract which includes a description of the leased real property that leaves no room for uncertainty; the

purpose of the lease; the term of the Lease Contract; the Rent and its payment method and the name of the real property owner if the Landlord is not the owner.

2. All lease contracts related to real property which is governed by the provisions of this Law and any amendments thereto, will be registered with Rera."

The landlord must hand over the property in good condition so the tenant can fully use it as agreed in the lease contract. This

is in accordance with Article-15 of Law No. (26) of 2007 Regulating the relationship between landlords and tenants in Dubai (Dubai Rent Law), which states:

The Landlord will be bound to hand over the real property in good condition, which allows the tenant full use stated in the lease contract." Unless agreed otherwise, the landlord is responsible during the lease term for maintenance and repairs affecting the tenant's use

of the property. This is in accordance with Article-16 of the Dubai Rent Law:

"Unless otherwise agreed by the parties, the landlord will, during the term of the lease contract, be responsible for the real property' maintenance works and for repairing any defect or damage that may affect the Tenant's intended use of the real property."

The landlord cannot make changes that interfere with the tenant's full use of the property and is liable for any resulting damage or defects. This is in accordance with Article-17 of the Dubai Rent Law.

The Landlord may not make to the real property or any of its amenities or annexes any changes that would preclude the tenant from full use of the real property as intended. The landlord will be responsible for such changes whether made by him or any other person authorised by the landlord.

Further, the landlord will be responsible for any defect, damage, deficiency and wear and tear occurring to the real property for reasons not attributable to the fault of the tenant."

Can a landlord charge different rents to tenants of the same building?

I live in a two-bedroom apartment in Dubai. I recently found out that my neighbour — who lives in a similar apartment — pays about Dh 5,000 less than I do because he pays the rent in a single cheque. Is it legal for landlords to charge tenants higher rent based on the number of instalments?

In Dubai, the rent must be specified in a tenancy contract. If the owner of a property and a tenant fail to specify the rent in the tenancy contract, the rent will be determined based on the rent of a similar property. This is in accordance with Article-9 of the Dubai Tenancy Law, which states: "Landlords and tenants must specify rent in the tenancy contracts. If the parties fail to specify the rent and it is impossible to prove the rent agreed upon by them, the rent will be the rental value of similar real property."

Furthermore, there is no specific provision that mandates the owner of the property to charge the same rent amount regardless of the number of cheque payments.

Rent amounts and payment terms are subject to the agreement between an owner of the property and a tenant, provided that the agreed rent does not exceed the maximum threshold set by the Dubai Land Department (DLD) rental index and as per Dubai Decree No. 43 of 2013 on rent increases.

An owner of a property may, at its discretion, offer lower rent when a tenant makes payment in fewer instalments. Therefore, if the rent charged to you falls within the permissible range of the DLD rental index, it may not be considered unlawful for the owner of a property to offer different rent based on the number of cheques. In accordance with the aforementioned, the owner of a property in Dubai may generally charge at its discretion varying rent amounts depending on the number of instalments agreed, provided the rent complies with the DLD rental index. You may verify your current rent through the DLD website to ensure it aligns with the prevailing rental index.

Second double-decker bus for Munnar tourists

IDUKKI: Munnar's misty hills just got a little closer to the clouds. Strengthening its appeal as one of Kerala's most loved tourist destinations, the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has rolled out its second double-decker bus service in the hill station, offering visitors a scenic ride through the high ranges like never before.

The new bus was formally inaugurated by Devikulam MLA A Raja marking another milestone in



KSRTC's efforts to blend public transport with tourism experiences. Built at

KSRTC's central works in Pappanamcode, Thiruvananthapuram, the bus

reached the Munnar depot a day ahead of its launch, creating much anticipation among tourists and locals alike.

Designed especially for sightseeing, the double-decker allows passengers to soak in Munnar's lush landscapes, tea gardens, reservoirs through wide, unobstructed views. With 11 seats on the lower deck and 39 on the upper deck, the bus has been thoughtfully designed to maximise visual experience while ensuring comfort. The service begins and ends at the Munnar depot, travelling along the Kochi-Dhanushkodi nation-

al highway and covering popular destinations such as Devikulam, Gap Road and Anayirangal before returning. The new bus operates at 8am, 11.30am and 3pm, complementing the existing "Royal View" double-decker service's runs at 9am, 12.30pm and 4pm.

A senior KSRTC official said the initiative is aimed at redefining public transport as a tourism product. "The overwhelming response to the first double-decker service proved that tourists are keen on experiencing Munnar in a comfortable and eco-friendly way," the official said.

MEA concerned about H-1B visa delays

NEW DELHI: India has raised concerns with the US over delays and cancellations in H-1B visa appointments after receiving multiple representations from affected Indian nationals, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said.

"India has received multiple representations from its nationals facing delays and difficulties in scheduling or rescheduling US visa appointments. While visa matters fall under the sovereign domain of the issuing country, India has raised these concerns with the US authorities in New Delhi and Washington," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said during his

weekly media briefing.

He said the prolonged delays had led to "extended hardships for affected individuals and their families, including disruptions to education," and added that the government remains "engaged with the US side to address the issue and minimise the impact on Indian nationals."

The issue has gained urgency against the backdrop of major changes announced by the Trump administration to the H-1B visa programme. The US is set to replace the long-standing random lottery system with a new selection process that prioritises higher-skilled and

higher-paid applicants.

The US Embassy in India advised applicants to expect delays in H-1B and H-4 visa issuance, citing longer processing times following an expanded review of online presence and urged them to submit applications as early as possible. Stranded and anxious, H-1B visa holders fear job loss amid US interview delays test.

"Beginning Dec 15, the Department of State expanded online presence reviews to all H-1B and H-4 applicants as part of standard visa screening. This vetting is being conducted globally for all applicants of all nationalities for H-1B and H-4 visas. It is an effort to address abuse of the H-1B program while still permitting companies to hire the best of the best temporary foreign workers," the US embassy said.

Amazon allows H-1B employees...

(Cont. from page - 1)

immigration policies requiring expanded social media reviews for visa applicants. These additional procedures have lengthened processing times at many embassies and consulates, leaving some applicants waiting for months or even into late 2026 or beyond. Amazon is among the largest corporate users of the H-1B programme, having filed nearly 14,800 H-1B applications in 2024,

Minimum 90-day work for gig workers' social security benefits

CHENNAI: The Centre has pre-published draft labour rules proposing that gig and platform workers must complete at least 90 days of work in a year to become eligible for social security benefits, marking a significant step towards operationalising welfare provisions for the fast-growing gig economy. The draft rules have been placed in the public domain to seek feedback from stakeholders, including workers, platform companies and state governments, before finalisation.

The proposed eligibility condition is aimed at ensuring that social security benefits are extended to individuals who demon-

strate a minimum level of regular engagement in gig or platform work. The rules seek to define the contours of employment continuity in a sector characterised by flexible, task-based engagements rather than traditional employer-employee relationships. Officials said the threshold of 90 days has been proposed to strike a balance between inclusivity and the need to prevent misuse of welfare benefits.

The draft rules outline the process for registration of gig and platform workers on a designated portal, which will serve as the basis for determining eligibility for benefits such as life and disability cover, health insurance, maternity benefits and old-age protection. Workers would be required to furnish basic identification details and proof of work undertaken during the year, while platform aggregators would have obligations to share verified data on worker engagement. The Centre has invited comments and suggestions from stakeholders within a specified consultation window, signalling its intent to refine the framework based on industry feedback.

In-flight use of power banks...

(Cont. from page - 1) fires overheating or catching fire on flights were reported from around the world.

In an advisory, the DGCA directed airlines to review their existing safety risk assessments pertaining to lithium batteries carried by passengers. The aviation watchdog has asked carriers to follow stronger measures to prevent battery-related fires in aircraft cabins as well as to ensure early detection and effective firefighting in case of an incident. It added that cabin crew must be able to recognise early warning signs such as overheating, smoke or flames. They should also use the right

firefighting equipment and understand the risks of smoke inhalation.

The DGCA said the advisory was issued after a surge in safety incidents around the world where lithium batteries were suspected to be the cause. Several other countries and major airlines -- including Emirates and Singapore Airlines -- have also enforced similar curbs to avoid safety hazards. In October last year, a passenger's power bank had caught fire on board a Dimapur-bound IndiGo plane. No injuries were reported, and all passengers and crew members were safe.