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PASSPORT TO GLOBAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES



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DESPITE WAR IN WEST ASIA

Remittances to Kerala remain robust

The West Asia conflict is being closely watched in Kerala, which accounts for nearly 20pc of India's total inward remittances and has one of the country's largest expatriate populations in the Gulf. Remittances to India saw a spike after the conflict intensified, with inflow from West Asia rising by 35pc in March 2026.

KOCHI: Even as the crisis in West Asia fuels concerns, Kerala-based banks say remittance inflows from the Gulf remain resilient for now, offering short-term relief to the state that depends heavily on overseas income.

The US-Iran conflict and the related developments are being closely watched in Kerala, which accounts for nearly 20pc of India's total inward remittances

and has one of the country's largest expatriate populations in the Gulf. Any prolonged disruption in the GCC economies could have far-reaching implications for household consumption, real estate, banking deposits and the state's broader economy.

Speaking during the fourth quarter earnings call of Federal Bank, managing director KVS Manian said remittance flows

continue to remain elevated despite the geopolitical situation. "Unless you see significant job losses and Indians returning for good to India, I don't think this story is likely to change immediately," he said. "As of now, we are seeing positive trends."

According to him, even in the event of a de-escalation, reconstruction activity in the region could sustain labour demand and keep remittance flows

robust. Drawing parallels with the post-pandemic period, he noted that the Gulf economies had weathered disruptions earlier too without causing a prolonged collapse in remittances to India. Federal Bank executive vice-president Joy PV said remittance volumes across all GCC corridors remained strong despite the volatile situation.

"The current situation in West Asia has introduced

a degree of uncertainty; however, remittance volumes so far have remained resilient," he said. "Across all GCC corridors — UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia — remittances in March and April were higher than in February," he said. Remittances to India saw a spike after the conflict intensified, with inflow from West Asia rising by 35 pc in March (Cont. on page - 2)



IndiGo to become first airline to launch flights from Noida Airport

NEW DELHI: IndiGo will become the launch carrier at the Noida International Airport that opens for commercial service from June 15. The airline said it will initially connect the airport to more than 16 domestic destinations in a phased rollout, covering metro cities such as Bengaluru and Hyderabad, along with tier-II and tier-III destinations including Amritsar, Chandigarh, Dharamshala, Jaipur, Lucknow, Pantnagar and Srinagar.

The development makes Noida International Airport the third operational airport in the National

Capital Region after Indira Gandhi International Airport and Hindon Airport.

(Cont. on page - 6)

Iran war dents demand for gold jewellery

DUBAI: Global demand for gold jewellery fell in the first quarter of 2026, tumbling from record highs as the precious metal comes under pressure amid uncertainty caused by the Iran war.

Buyers are more cautious in their spending decisions and channelling funds more into bullion investments, rather than buying more expensive finished

gold jewellery. Investors are hedging their bets owing to the conflict that has roiled markets across asset classes. The jewellery market outlook also remains murky, analysts say.

The rebound in the market would depend — much like other asset classes — on how long the conflict will last and when conditions return to normal. Why continuing tariff fears

Goa assures tourist safety

PANAJI: Goa tourism authorities have reiterated their commitment to tourist safety after a viral parasailing incident was mistakenly believed to have occurred in the state.

Speaking on the issue, Kedar Naik, Chairman, Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC), clarified that after the video surfaced online, it was later confirmed that the incident had taken place outside Goa. He stressed

that despite the negative attention generated by the video, ensuring the safety and well-being of tourists remains the government's primary concern.

"Whenever tourists come to Goa, they should leave with good memories," Naik said while emphasising the importance of strict safety protocols during adventure tourism activities. He stated that all operators involved in activities such as parasailing and

boat rides must ensure the use of proper safety equipment and precautionary measures at all times. According to Naik, maintaining high safety standards is essential for preserving Goa's reputation as a safe and preferred tourist destination.

"Whether it is parasailing or a boat ride, proper precautionary measures should always be taken," he added. Naik further (Cont. on page - 2)



are baseless?

"Geopolitical tensions have had a clear and direct impact. Gold, being

a safe-haven asset, saw stronger investment demand during periods of (Cont. on page - 2)

New hotel opening expands Muscat tourism landscape

MUSCAT: A new hotel opening in Muscat is reflecting growing investor confidence in Oman's tourism sector as the Sultanate of Oman continues to advance diversification goals under Oman Vision 2040. Legacy Hotels holding marked the launch of Golden Tulip Muscat The Village, its sixth proper-

ty in Oman and fourth in the capital, reinforcing its long-term expansion plans in the local hospitality market.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Azzan bin Qasim al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and developed in collaboration with

Bin Al Sheikh for Hotel and Resorts Management. The project forms part of a broader master plan aimed at blending hospitality, retail and cultural experiences along a coastal setting.

In an exclusive interview, Fahad Abdulrahim Kazim, Co-Founder and CEO of Legacy Hotels Holding, underscored Oman's strategic importance within the group's regional growth plans. The new 68-key, four-star property is located within The Village, a mixed-use development that reflects the evolving direction

(Cont. on page - 6)



Iran war dents demand for..

(Cont. from page - 1) uncertainty, pushing prices higher," Chandu Siroya, vice chairman of Dubai Jewellery Group, said. "However, this has created a divergence – investment demand for bullion strengthened while jewellery demand softened due to high prices."

Global gold jewellery demand faced its weakest three-month period since the second quarter of 2020, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, the World Gold Council (WGC) said in its latest quarterly report.

However, despite the demand slump, the value of spending on gold jewellery shot up 31pc annually to \$47 billion – the highest level of spending for a

first quarter – as the higher price of gold during the period offset weak demand. In the broader MidEast, gold jewellery demand fell 23pc year-on-year to 34.5 tonnes in the three months to the end of March.

Demand in the UAE, the Arab world's second-largest economy, dropped by 40pc to 4.7 tonnes. In Saudi Arabia, quarterly volume declined 13pc annually to 12.7 tonnes.

Despite the decreased volumes in the region, the aggregate value of jewellery demand rose 30pc year-on-year to hit a record \$5 billion, on the back of higher price of gold. Ramadan and the Eid Al Fitr break in Feb and March offered some support to gold jewellery demand,

but the combination of record gold prices and the outbreak of the Iran war caused demand stagnation in some markets, the London-based WGC said.

Even in India, where gold jewellery is an investment and cultural commodity, demand slid 19pc annually – and 55pc quarter-on-quarter – to 66.1 tonnes during the quarter.

Overall, total gold demand in the first quarter edged up two per cent annually to about 1,231 tonnes, with its value jumping 74pc to a record \$193 billion.

Goa assures tourist...

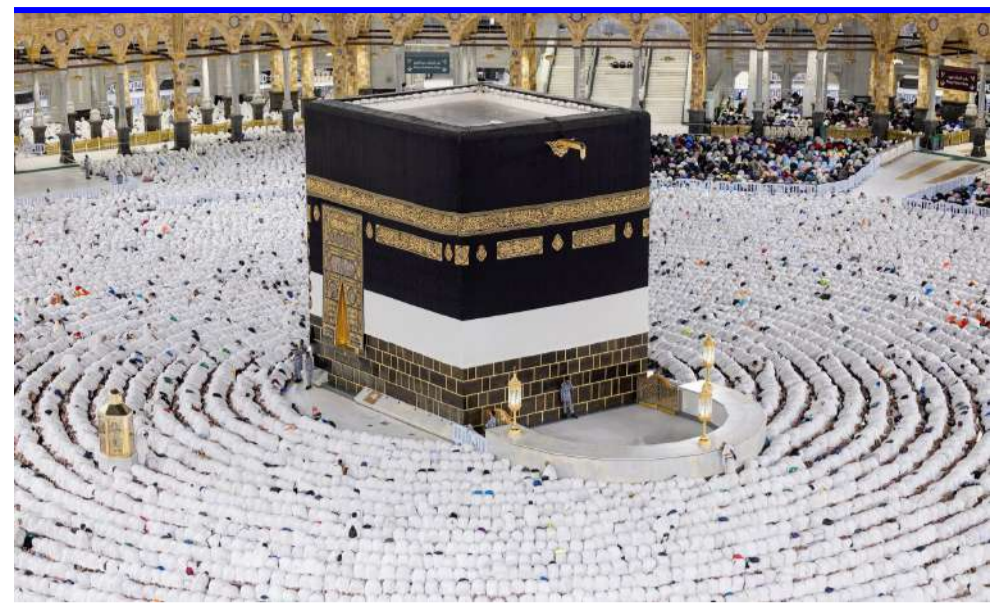
(Cont. from page - 1) noted that tourism in Goa can continue to grow only if authorities and tourism stakeholders consistently follow and enforce safety guidelines. Appealing to tourism operators, he urged them to remain vigilant and proactive in preventing such incidents in the future.

"Although this particular incident did not happen in Goa, such incidents should never happen here in the future.

Whatever safety measures and precautions we can take, we must take them, so that tourists carry good memories from Goa and not bad experiences," he said.

Remittances to Kerala...

(Cont. from page - 1) 2026. West Asia crisis prompted surge in NRI interest for homes in Kerala. Joy said there were no visible signs yet of moderation in business activity. "While there are reports of lower economic momentum, it has not yet translated into any visible moderation in remittance flows or business," he noted. According to him, many expatriates are choosing to send money home earlier than usual as a precautionary measure.



Haj pilgrims face problems with mandated GPS watch

NEW DELHI: When a sudden airfare hike of Rs10,000 per pilgrim was announced in late April, it set off a wider debate over what India's Haj pilgrims were actually paying for—and one item that came under immediate scrutiny was a deduction for a GPS-enabled smartwatch that each of the 1.2 lakh pilgrims had been mandated to carry.

The "Haj Suvidha Smart-

watch" is a required safety device for Indian pilgrims this year. The decision, implemented by the Haj Committee of India, was centred around pilgrim safety, but has triggered questions over cost, execution and necessity. While the pre-bid estimate per piece was around Rs. 7,000, the final price was Rs. 5,110, Kausar Jahan, chairperson of the Delhi

(Cont. on page - 6)

Saudi tightens Haj 2026 rules; violators to face heavy fines

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has announced strict new penalties for residents and visitors who attempt to perform Haj without an official permit, as authorities intensify efforts to control overcrowding and improve pilgrim safety during Haj 1447 AH.

The Saudi ministry of Interior confirmed that anyone caught performing or attempting to perform Haj without a valid permit

could face a fine of up to SR20,000. Foreign residents who violate the rules will also face deportation and a 10-year ban from re-entering the Kingdom.

The announcement comes as Saudi authorities tighten regulations ahead of the annual pilgrimage season, one of the world's largest religious gatherings attended by millions of Muslims globally.

(Cont. on page - 6)

"Some customers are advancing or consolidating remittances amid evolving regional conditions, a trend observed across both retail and HNI segments," he added.

Similar trends are visible at other Kerala-focused lenders as well. ESAF Small Finance Bank executive vice-president Sudev Kumar said remittances initially surged after the crisis, intensified because of panic-driven transfers. "There was an increase in remittances during the initial period of the crisis because of the perceived uncertainty and resultant panic reactions. But that has subsided now," he said. "People are maintaining confidence in the economies of the MidEast countries. Also, favourable exchange rate is a driver," he said.

In its latest bi-monthly monetary policy statement, RBI warned that weaker global growth prospects could dampen external demand and reduce remittance flows.

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FOREX RATES
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Currency	Bill Buy	Bill Sell
US Dollar	94.38	95.6
British Pound	128.25	130.02
Euro	110.62	112.93
Japanese Yen	60.07	61.02
Swiss Franc (CHF)	120.65	123.29
Canadian Dollar	68.66	70.2
Australian Dollar	68.05	69.51
Norwegian Krone	10.14	10.44
Swedish Krona	10.09	10.38
New Zealand Dollar	55.85	57.07
Hong Kong Dollar	11.9	12.26
Kuwaiti Dinar	316.53	305.7
Singapore Dollar	74.02	75.69
Saudi Arabian Riyal	24.83	25.61
U A E Dirham	25.42	26.15

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TAFI Convention moves to Greece from Oct 4-7, 2026

NEW DELHI: The Travel Agents Federation (TAFI) of India has announced that its 2026 Annual Convention will be

held in Rhodes from Oct 4 to 7, 2026. The convention is expected to bring together members of the Indian travel trade along

with international tourism stakeholders, providing a platform for networking, business discussions and insights into emerging

travel trends. As one of the key annual gatherings for India's travel agency community, the TAFI Convention plays a crucial role in

fostering partnerships and strengthening industry collaboration. By choosing Greece as the host destination, TAFI is aiming to

OTOAI acknowledges PM's austerity call, flags impact on outbound tourism

NEW DELHI: OTOAI has acknowledged the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal in the national interest, while stating that the move is a huge blow to the outbound tourism fraternity. The association has sought an audience with the PMO to present the concerns of the sector and its stakeholders. "The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) stands firmly with the Government of India and the vision shared by Prime Minister Modi in this period of global un-

certainty. For us, the country comes first—always. As responsible citizens and as representatives of the travel fraternity, we fully support every effort aimed at keeping India safe, strong and economically resilient." At the same time, we must respectfully highlight that tourism is often the first casualty in any crisis. It is among the first sectors to be hit and, unfortunately, among the last to recover. The Hon'ble Prime Minister's appeal to citizens to defer non-essential foreign travel and choose

domestic tourism, made in the larger national interest amid concerns over fuel prices, foreign exchange and global disruptions, will naturally have a significant impact on the outbound travel community.

While we cannot fully ascertain all the circumstances that led to this important national call, we recognise the seriousness of the situation and the need for collective responsibility. However, we are also deeply concerned about the livelihoods of thousands of travel professionals, tour

operators, travel agents and allied service providers who depend on outbound tourism.

In light of this, OTOAI has initiated the process of seeking an audience with the Prime Minister's Office to place before the government the concerns, challenges and practical realities of the travel trade. We hope to arrive at a balanced and reasonable way forward that protects national interest while also safeguarding the people and businesses connected with our industry.

By choosing Greece as the host destination, TAFI is aiming to deepen engagement with European tourism partners while offering its members exposure to the Mediterranean's diverse travel offerings. The selection of Rhodes—known for its blend of cultural heritage and leisure tourism—further enhances the appeal of the event, particularly at a time when demand for European destinations among Indian travellers continues to grow.

TAFI's previous convention was held in Vietnam in January 2025, where the focus was on expanding outbound opportunities and strengthening ties with Southeast Asian markets.

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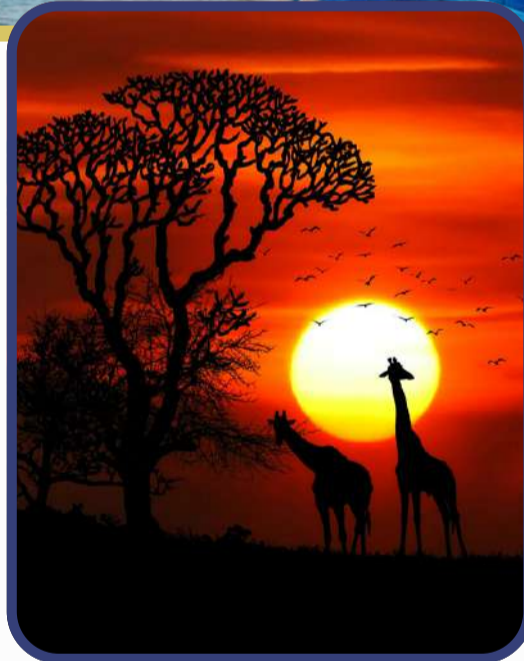
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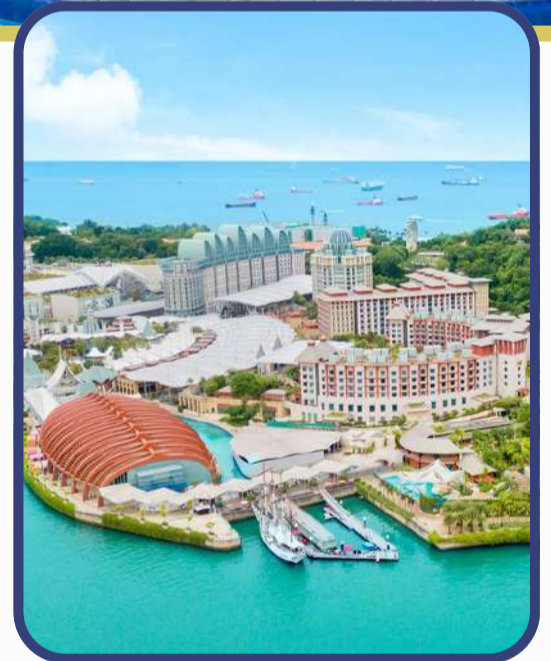
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GULF FAQs

Can employer change your duties without consent?

I was hired by someone with specific KPIs that aligned with my skillset and I consistently met or exceeded them. He has now left the organisation and my new manager expects a completely different set of deliverables, some of which are not aligned with my experience or expertise. I feel like I am being set up to fail. Is there a way I can rely on my job contract and defined role to make a case for maintaining my original responsibilities, or at least ensure that any changes to my duties are reasonable and fairly assessed?

In the UAE, an employer may not assign different roles to an employee other than those mentioned in the employment contract without the written consent of an employee. This is in accordance with Arti-

cle 12(1) & (2) of Federal Decree Law no. 33 of 2021 Regarding the Regulation of Employment Relationships and its amendments (the "Employment Law"), which states: An employee may not be assigned another work which is substantially different from the work agreed upon in the employment contract, unless such an assignment is necessary or aims to avoid an accident or rectify the consequences thereof, provided that the assignment is temporary as specified by the Executive Regulations of this Decree-Law.

* An employer may, entrust the employee with a work that is not agreed upon in the employment contract, with the written consent of the employee.

It is an obligation of an employer to invest in the development of the skill of the workers by providing

them training and tools in accordance with the law and implementing regulation. This is in accordance with the Article 13 of the Employment Law: * "Investing in the development of the skills of workers working for its service and providing the minimum amount of training, qualification and empowerment tools and programmes as per the provisions of this Decree-Law and its Implementing Regulation"

However, an employer may not force or threaten an employee with any penalty or force him to work against his will. This is in accordance with Article 14(1) of the Employment Law, which states: "An employer may not use any means susceptible of obliging or forcing the employee or threatening him with any penalty to work for him or forcing him to do a work or de-

liver a service against his will." In the event, an employer forces an employee to perform any other work other than those mentioned in the employment contract based on employee's designation, then an employee may quit the employment without serving the notice period to an employer.

This is in accordance with Article 45(4) of the Employment Law, which states: "The employee may quit work without notice and reserve all his entitlements at the end of service if the employer entrusts the employee with a work that is substantially different from the work agreed upon in the employment contract, without the written consent of the employee, except in cases stated in Article 12 hereof." Based on the aforementioned provisions of law, an employer cannot

assign work that is substantially different from the agreed role without the employee's written consent. You may review your contract to seek alignment of duties or request appropriate training, as it is your employer's obligation to invest in the development of its employee to upskill through training. An employer cannot force his employee to undertake new tasks without their agreement.

If you feel pressured to perform tasks outside the scope of your original contract and this pressure includes threats or coercion, you may resign. You may discuss this with your employer and ask them to pay for the training to develop skills to do the significantly different work as requested by your employer. Further if your employer does not agree to this and is forcing you to do the different job role, you may approach the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization and register a complaint against your employer.

Can employee challenge company's refusal to pay earned commission?

I filed a case against my company because it refused to pay me the commission for a deal that was completed and closed in 2022. The First Instance Court awarded me the claimed amount. The company has appealed against the judgment, claiming that I am not entitled to the commission due to the passage of years. Is the company correct in this claim?

According to Article 54(9) of the Labour Law, amended by Federal Decree-Law No. 9 of 2024, which revises certain provisions of Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021, "litigation concerning any rights accrued under this Decree-Law may not be considered after two years from the date of ter-



mination of employment."

The plea that a claim for any rights arising under Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 cannot be heard after the lapse of two years from the due date, as stipulated in Article 54(9), is a

substantive plea. It may be raised at any stage of the case, including for the first time before the Court of Appeal, unless it is proven to have been explicitly or implicitly waived.

Based on the above and

on Labour Cassation Court Ruling No. 146/2024 dated 17/12/2024, we can consider that a "commission," as an employee right, is subject to the two-year limitation rule in Article 54. However, whether this plea

applies is ultimately a matter for the court to decide.

The Cassation Ruling No. 146/2024 stated: "It was established that the appellant adhered to the defence of inadmissibility of the case and had not waived it explicitly or implicitly, as the company submitted to the court that the original case should not be heard regarding the commission due to the passage of time. If true, this would affect the court's decision. The contested ruling ignored this argument, did not examine it and issued its judgment regarding the commission without addressing it. Therefore, the ruling is flawed due to lack of reasoning and a violation of the appellant's right to defence, necessitating its annulment.

Neon lights to canyon heights: a classic American road trip through Southwest

The 442-km journey from the dazzling neon skyline of Las Vegas to the majestic cliffs of Grand Canyon National Park offers travellers far more than a simple drive. It is a scenic adventure through the landscapes, culture and history of the American Southwest.

Leaving Las Vegas behind, travellers follow Interstate 11 toward the mighty Colorado River, where the spectacular Hoover Dam and the Mike O'Callaghan - Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge provide breathtaking desert views. Continuing south on Highway 93 through the Mohave Desert, the journey reaches Kingman, Arizona, a town deeply connected to the spirit of the legendary Route 66. Visitors can enjoy classic Americana at Mr D's Route 66 Diner and explore the

Kingman Powerhouse Visitor Center before continuing along Historic Route 66.

The road then winds through Peach Springs and the Hualapai Nation, passing iconic stops such as the Hackberry General Store. In nearby Seligman, preserved storefronts, neon signs and the famous Snow Cap Drive-In recreate the golden era of American road travel.

Red Feather Lodge

Further east, the mountain town of Williams welcomes visitors with Route 66 nostalgia and attractions such as Bearizona, a popular wildlife park



featuring North American animals in natural surroundings. From Williams, Highway 64 climbs through the pine-covered landscapes of the Kaibab National Forest toward Tusayan, the gateway to the Grand Canyon South Rim. Just minutes from the



canyon stands Red Feather Lodge, conveniently located near the South Entrance. The lodge offers hotel and motel accommodations, an outdoor pool, fitness centre, free Wi-Fi and shuttle access to

the national park. Visitors are encouraged to spend at least two nights exploring the canyon's breathtaking viewpoints, hiking trails, wildlife experiences, stargazing opportunities and unforgettable desert sunsets. For more info visit RedFeatherLodge.com

Haj Pilgrims face problems...

(Cont. from page - 2)

The watch, procured by the Haj Committee of India and supplied by Sekyo, a Delhi-based firm, positioned as a safety measure is first-of-its-kind tracking initiative unmatched by any other major Haj-sending nation.

But pilgrims who have since departed say the devices are "not turning on", "not holding charge", and not "actually tracking" anyone.

Sekyo said that the watches are fully tested, functioning and delivering 1-2 days of backup despite continuous health monitoring and live location transmission on international roaming, and no hardware replacement cases have been reported.

"Since many pilgrims are elderly, less educated and not technically proficient, the watch is intentionally designed with restricted features during the Haj season.

IndiGo to become first airline...

(Cont. from page - 1)

IndiGo said bookings are being progressively opened across its website, app and travel partner platforms. The airline will begin with inaugural flights connecting Lucknow, Bengaluru and Noida on June 15, followed by scheduled daily services to Hyderabad, Amritsar and Jammu from June 16.

From July 1, the carrier plans a wider network expansion to destinations including Srinagar, Navi

Mumbai, Bhopal, Dehradun, Bareilly and Kishanagarh.

Aloke Singh, chief strategy officer at IndiGo, said the launch reflects the evolution of large Indian metropolitan regions into multi-airport systems capable of handling rising passenger traffic. Located along the Yamuna Expressway, the airport is expected to improve connectivity for western UP and ease congestion at Delhi's IGI Airport.

Saudi tightens Haj 2026 rules...

(Cont. from page - 2)

Saudi Arabia's new Haj rules: Saudi Arabia has made it clear that only officially authorised pilgrims will be allowed to enter Makkah and the holy sites during the Haj season. Authorities said obtaining a legal Haj permit is now a mandatory requirement for all pilgrims, including residents already living inside the Kingdom. The Ministry

of Interior said the restrictions apply from the first day of Dhu Al Qi'dah until the 14th day of Dhu Al Hijjah. During this period, holders of visit visas are prohibited from entering or remaining in Makkah without proper Haj authorisation. Saudi officials said the measures are aimed at ensuring smooth crowd management, reducing congestion and protecting pilgrims

during extreme summer temperatures. Last year's Haj season saw major concerns around overcrowding and heat-related deaths, pushing authorities to strengthen permit enforcement this year. The crackdown does not only target unauthorised pilgrims. Saudi authorities have also introduced tougher penalties for anyone helping violators enter Makkah illegally.

New hotel opening expands...

(Cont. from page - 2)

of Muscat's tourism landscape towards integrated lifestyle destinations. Positioned around 10 minutes from Muscat International Airport, the hotel is designed to cater to both business and leisure travellers, offering dining outlets, meeting space, a gym and an outdoor pool. For Legacy Hotels Holding, the expansion signals continued confidence in Oman's tourism fundamentals and policy direction. Fahad highlighted the Sultanate of Oman's positioning as a

key growth market within the group's regional strategy.

"Oman remains a very important market for us. We already have six hotels operating here and we are continuing to expand our footprint", Fahad said. "When we assess markets, we look first at the fundamentals and Oman offers strong unique selling points alongside strong government support, particularly through tourism as a key pillar of Oman Vision 2040".

The company's devel-

opment pipeline further underscores this trajectory. Fahad revealed that between seven and eight additional properties are expected to open across Oman over the next 18 to 24 months, reflecting sustained investor confidence and rising demand. "We see strong alignment between public and private sector efforts in Oman, which gives us confidence that the market will continue to grow", he said. "This is a market where development is happening with clear direction".