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Modi to visit Oman, Jordan next week

NEW DEHI: Next week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Oman, a move set to fortify India's longstanding strategic alliance in West Asia.

The focus of this visit includes enhancing trade ties and investment opportunities, particularly through an anticipated economic partnership agreement. He will also visit Jordan and Ethiopia during this visit starting on Dec 15..

Modi's visit to Oman on the occasion of 70 years of establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations is expected to boost ties with the West Asian country which is not only India's oldest strategic partner in the oil-rich region but also among its key economic partners.

The trip comes almost two years after the current Oman Sultan's first state visit to India.



H.M. Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman and Modi long lasting friendship

The proposed comprehensive economic partnership agreement and bilateral investment between India and Oman will provide a stim-

ulus to bilateral trade and investments.

Oman is India's closest defence partner in West Asia and defence co-operation has emerged as a key pillar of the strategic partnership between the two countries. Oman is the first Gulf country with which all three wings of India's defence forces have held joint exercises, said an official. The country has also allowed the Indian Navy access to the Duqm port in the Indian Ocean Region.

Indian-origin Omani citizens hold key positions in the country. Oman has also been a steady supporter of India's position on terrorism, including at Tic Co-operation.

Economic and commercial relations between India and Oman are robust and buoyant. Bilateral trade increased to \$10.61 billion in 2024-25 from \$8.95 billion in 2023-24.



SpiceJet to add 100 flights to its winter schedule

MUMBAI: With the country's aviation scenario getting back on track after facing major cancellations by IndiGo, another carrier SpiceJet is now all set to have around 100 more daily flights in winter schedule, after the necessary regulatory approvals.

This follows a day after government curtailed 10pc of IndiGo's winter schedule flights, which was a step intended to stabilise

(Cont. on page - 2)

High speed train to link Riyadh-Doha

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia and Qatar have signed a deal to construct a high-speed rail connecting the Gulf kingdoms' capitals.

According to a statement in the official Saudi press, the "high-speed electric passenger railway" would connect Riyadh and Doha.

The Saudi cities of Al-Hofuf and Dammam are also expected to be on the network. The train would reach speeds exceeding 300 kms per hour (186 mph) and the trip would take roughly two hours between the two capitals. A direct flight between the cities clocks in at around 90 minutes.

Ravi Gosain appointed as chair of FICCI Inbound Tourism Committee

NEW DELHI: The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has appointed Ravi Gosain, president of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), as the Chair of the FICCI Inbound Tourism Committee, a key sub-committee under the National FICCI Tourism Committee.

The appointment has been made by FICCI in the Indian tourism industry and his leadership in significant contributions to the inbound travel sector.



Accepting the role, Ravi Gosain expressed his gratitude and reiterated his commitment to enhancing India's position as a preferred global tourism destination.

Gosain while accepting this position in FICCI has mentioned that India's inbound tourism entering a transformative phase, and this role provides a valuable opportunity to collaborate with industry leaders

(Cont. on page - 2)

More companies to hire in March quarter

BENGALURU: More Indian employers plan to hire in the coming quarter despite an overall moderation in hiring volumes, especially at large enterprises, according to a survey by ManpowerGroup.

Around 63pc of 3,051 Indian employers said they would hire more people in the March quarter while 11pc expect a decrease in hiring intent or don't have plans to backfill positions, as per Manpower's latest Employment Outlook Survey. This positions the net employment outlook, used

as a bellwether of labour market trends, at 52pc -- the difference between companies looking to hire and those expecting a fall.

Hiring sentiments are 28 percentage points higher than the global average, placing India's outlook for the March quarter at the second-highest globally, after Brazil. The country's outlook next quarter is stronger by 12 percentage points compared with January-March 2025 and up 11 percentage points from the Dec quarter.

While more employers

intend to add manpower, hiring volumes have declined. A typical company's total workforce is expected to grow by 65 workers next quarter, a 60pc drop since Manpower began tracking this metric in April-June 2025, when the figure stood at 162. This decline is largely driven by firms employing between 1000-4999 workers.

"India's hiring outlook is signalling a new phase of economic confidence and capability-building," said Sandeep Gulati, managing director, ManpowerGroup India and MidEast. "What these trends reflect is India's transition from volume-led hiring to value creation: organisations are investing in the skills, technologies and talent architectures that will define their competitiveness over the next decade." "The moderation in hiring intensity, especially among large enterprises, is strategic - not cautious. Companies are re-engineering their workforce models, prioritising high-impact

(Cont. on page - 2)



Aviodable chaos

The IndiGo crisis was waiting to happen. Once the poster child of India's low-cost aviation boom -- commanding a 60pc market share and 2,000 daily flights -- IndiGo is now losing its hard-won reputation as the country's reliable, no-frills carrier. And this happened at the peak tourism as well wedding season.

At the heart of the crisis is the new set of crew-rostering rules -- Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) -- that was notified as early as in Jan 2024 and came into force in two phases. This gives pilots and cabin crew more rest. IndiGo is accused of failing a planned introduction of FDTL leaving it short of legally rested staff and forcing it to ground more than half its fleet. The rules include longer weekly rest for pilots (48 hours instead of 36) and tighter limits on night landings (two instead of six) after years of fatigue complaints to the regulator.

Every airline had the same timeline. Others adjusted networks, reduced flying where needed and complied with the new norms. Using its market dominance, IndiGo seemed to

have tried to get more concessions. Even as its duty rosters stretched to breaking point, the airline pushed ahead with an expanded winter schedule when it simply did not have the manpower to fly. IndiGo scheduled over 15,000 domestic flights a week this winter, a six per cent jump over its summer operations, without enough pilots and crew required to operate them under the new FDTL norms. In fact, the Airline Pilots Association of India has accused IndiGo of engineering an artificial crisis to pressurise the government into temporary waivers.

Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said during the last 10 days, many passengers faced severe inconvenience due to IndiGo's "internal mismanagement" of crew rosters, flight schedules, and "inadequate" communication. While the inquiry and necessary actions are "underway", another meeting with IndiGo's "top management" was held to review the "stabilisation measures", he stated. In a knee-jerk reaction, Naidu has asked IndiGo to reduce domestic flights by 10pc for the entire winter season to help stabilise operations. This curtailment is double what the DGCA had ordered on Monday. The cancellations will apply to high-frequency domestic routes and not to the roughly 600 routes where IndiGo is the sole operator. In Oct, the DGCA had approved IndiGo's winter schedule of 2,145 flights per day. The reduction in IndiGo's flight schedule is unlikely to be fully absorbed by other airlines, such as Air India, Akasa Air and SpiceJet, except on high-demand routes from major metros like Delhi and Mumbai.

In Indian aviation, the year is divided into two seasons: summer (late March to late Oct) and winter (late Oct to late March). Every Indian carrier must get each season's schedule approved by the DGCA for airport slot allocation. This means IndiGo has been directed to remove about 215 daily flights from its winter schedule, bringing its operations down to roughly 1,930 daily flights until late March.

Now the million dollar question is what measures will the government put in place to ensure such disruptions do not happen again in the future and how will it protect travellers from similar situations?

LIPSYNCH

"Do not be embarrassed by your failures, learn from them and start again." ----- Richard Branson

Rupee at 90 signals cost shock for Indian students abroad

NEW DELHI: The rupee's fall to 90 per US dollar marks a critical stress point for Indian families funding overseas education. A decline from 84 to 90 in just eight months amounts to a nearly seven per cent depreciation--- a small percentage on paper, but a sizeable jump when applied to dollar-denominated tuition, rent, insurance and daily expenses.

For students in the US, UK, Canada and Australia, the impact is immediate: every \$1,000 now requires thousands more in rupee terms. Annual education budgets carefully planned at earlier exchange rates have already overshot



projections, forcing many families to revise financial plans, increase loan amounts or tap into additional savings.

The depreciation also affects students with ongoing EMI obligations, as loan disbursements tied to the dollar now release fewer tangible benefits in rupee value. With living

costs abroad already high due to inflation, the weaker rupee intensifies financial vulnerability. The current exchange rate, therefore, isn't just a currency movement -- it is a structural pressure point altering affordability, budgets and long-term financial planning for thousands of Indian students overseas.

Dubai's most expensive table? spend Dh200,000 to welcome New Year

DUBAI: Dubai's luxury hospitality sector is gearing up for one of its busi-

est nights of the year, with premium venues unveiling high-end packages for

New Year's Eve, including a Dh200,000 VIP table at Atlantis, The Palm.

Atlantis announced that Maroon 5 will headline its 2026 New Year's Eve gala dinner on Dec 31, marking one of the most high-profile performances in Dubai's holiday calendar.

The resort revealed that seating options span a wide range: premium seats start at Dh6,500 for adults and Dh4,500 for children, with

(Cont. on page - 6)

More companies to hire in March quarter

(Cont. from page - 1) roles and blending permanent, specialist, and flexible talent to stay resilient amid shifting global dynamics," he added.

Finance and insurance (61pc), and professional, scientific and technical services (57pc) have the strongest hiring intentions, followed by construction and real estate (54pc) and

manufacturing (53pc). Company expansions (43pc) and technological advancements (38pc) remain the top factors behind headcount increases, while automation (42pc) tops the list for anticipated workforce reductions.

Ravi Gosain appointed as chair of FICCI...

(Cont. from page - 1) and government stakeholders to accelerate sustainable and globally competitive growth and he looks forward to contributing meaningfully to the committee's initiatives.

With Gosain's appointment, FICCI aims to further strengthen industry-led initiatives that foster innovation, enable international outreach and support long-term strategic planning for India's inbound tourism sector.

(Cont. from page - 1) operations of the airline. SpiceJet in a statement said: "We are witnessing strong and growing demand across key routes this winter, and look forward to ramping up operations to ensure adequate capacity in India's aviation market."

The airline further said that as part of this effort, it plans to introduce up to 100 additional daily flights during the current winter schedule, subject to regulatory approvals.

The airline has said that during the past two

months, it has brought 17 aircraft into active operations through a mix of damp-leased aircraft and the return of its own aircraft in service. The SpiceJet believes that this enhanced fleet availability gives it the operational flexibility to deploy incremental capacity on high-demand routes and improve overall network resilience. "Our focus in the current schedule period is to add several more aircraft, maximise aircraft utilisation and strengthen connectivity through better planning," the airline said in a statement.

The airline has said that during the past two

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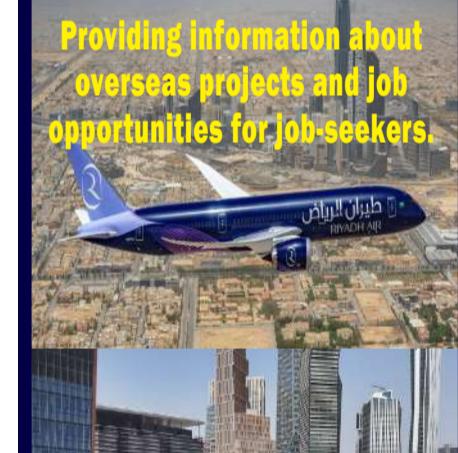
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As on 11th December 2025 (In rupees)

Currency	Bill Buy	Bill Sell
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Euro	104.31	106.51
Japanese Yen	57.47	58.4
Swiss Franc (CHF)	111.51	113.99
Canadian Dollar	64.47	65.95
Australian Dollar	59.25	60.54
Norwegian Krone	8.74	9
Swedish Krona	9.55	9.82
New Zealand Dollar	51.63	52.77
Hong Kong Dollar	11.35	11.7
Kuwaiti Dinar	299.4464	282.6715
Singapore Dollar	68.85	70.42
Saudi Arabian Riyal	23.53	24.28
UAE Dirham	24.1	24.8

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QA/QC INSPECTOR PAINTING

Bachelor's degree/ diploma in Engineering with at least 8 years of Oil & Gas industrial experience.

SAFETY OFFICER

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- Telephone Technician / Telecom Tech. - Camera Serviceman

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- Water Treatment Formen - HVAC Technician

- Diesel Mechanic (Heavy Vehicle) - Welder / Pipe Fitter

- Hydraulics Mechanic (Crane) - Plumbing Supervisor

- Elevator Technician - KLE Technician

- Pumps Technician - Chiller Technician

- Water Treatment Technician - Copper Welder

- Chiller Operator - Plumber

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- Gypsum work / POP - Spray Painter

- Housekeeping Supervisor / Foreman - Furniture Carpenter

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GULF FAQS

Can you work elsewhere during paid garden leave in UAE?

My company terminated my employment three weeks ago and instructed me not to report to work during my three-month notice period. They are treating this period as paid garden leave, but the condition is that I am not allowed to work for another company during this time. I have received another job opportunity. Does the company have the right to impose this restriction, especially since they

have already terminated me? What steps can I take to have this condition withdrawn?

Yes, the company has the right to request that



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

I filed a case against my company because they 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 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 termination 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.

you not work for another employer during your three-month notice period, as they are paying you for that time. During these three months, you are still considered to be within the notice period agreed upon between both parties, in accordance with Article (43) of the UAE Labour Law.

As per Article (43): "The

employment contract continues to be valid throughout the notice period referred to in this Article and is terminated upon expiry of such period. The worker shall be entitled to his full wage for that period according to the last wage

he was receiving and shall work during that period if the employer requests the same from him." The party that fails to comply with the notice period must compensate the other party with a payment known as a notice period allowance, even if the lack of notification does not cause any damage. This compensa-

tion shall be equal to the employee's wage for the full notice period or the remaining part thereof.

You do, however, have the right to mutually agree with your employer to waive or shorten the notice period. If the company does not agree to such an exemption, you are legally required to comply with the original notice period terms, as stated in the same Article (43): "It may be agreed upon to exempt from the notice period condition or to reduce its period while preserving all the rights of the worker for the notice period agreed upon in the employment contract, provided that the notice period is the same for both parties."

How to choose a legal guardian?

Every parent works tirelessly to provide a life of security, stability and love for their children. But true protection goes beyond the present; it includes preparing for the unexpected and making decisions today that can safeguard your child's tomorrow. One of the most meaningful ways expat parents in the UAE can do this is by appointing legal guardians for their minor children through a registered will. This decision ensures that, should anything happen, your child's care and upbringing will be entrusted to the people you choose, not left to chance.

In the UAE, many parents don't realise that if something happens to the father, the mother is not automatically considered the legal guardian of minor children. Without a registered will, this can lead to court involvement and decisions that may not reflect your wishes. Stating a clear guardian in your UAE will helps avoid confusion and ensures a smooth transition of care.

Choosing a legal guardian is not just a legal box to tick. It's a deeply personal act that reflects your values, beliefs and hopes for your child's future. Without a registered will in place, guardianship decisions may default to complex court proceedings, potentially resulting in unexpected delays or decisions that don't align with your wishes. But with a legally recognised will, your intentions are clearly documented and enforceable under the UAE law.

"It's not just paperwork, it's protection. Appointing a guardian secures your child's future, exactly the way you intended," says Muhammad Tariq, managing partner at Legal Inz. In the UAE, parents can formally appoint legal guardians for their minor children through registered wills under both the DIFC Wills Service Centre and the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department (ADJD). These frameworks allow for the appointment of permanent guardians, who will assume long-term responsi-

bility, as well as temporary guardians based in the UAE, who can step in immediately to provide care until the permanent guardians are able to take over. Many also name alternate guardians to cover unforeseen changes in circumstances. Parents can also structure their will to include layered guardianship appointing multiple guardians in a defined order of priority. This ensures there is always a trusted caregiver available to step in for the child.

This structure ensures a smooth and uninterrupted transition of care, offering legal clarity, emotional stability and the reassurance that a child will always be looked after by trusted individual(s) from the very beginning. Along with guardianship instructions, a will also allow parents to outline how their assets should be distributed, including naming their minor children as beneficiaries. This ensures not just care, but financial security, is preserved according to their wishes.

Bringing gold to India? new customs rules likely to make it easier, cheaper

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced that a "complete overhaul of the customs rules is on the cards," calling it her next major reform. It will be NRI-friendly.

At the recent HT Leadership Summit, she stressed the need for simpler, more transparent procedures, saying: "We need to make them a lot more simplified for people to feel that it is not too tiresome, cumbersome for them to comply with the expectations and rules." Her remarks come as NRIs, especially those

in the UAE, increasingly urge India to update its duty-free gold jewellery limits, which many say no longer reflect economic reality. With gold prices near Rs13,000 per gram in India and Dh508 per gram in Dubai, long-term expatriates argue that the allowances set in 2016 are now obsolete. Current rules contradict India's goals of boosting tourism and destination weddings, both of which involve significant use of traditional jewellery.

The current rules permit 20 gm of jewellery worth

Rs 50,000 for men and 40 gm worth Rs1 lakh for women, values that now cover only a small portion of the intended weight. When making charges are included, travellers say the real duty-free quantity drops by almost 70pc leaving even modest personal jewellery at risk of scrutiny.

UAE-based NRI groups have formally requested clearer, more realistic guidelines, citing rising complaints of unnecessary interrogations and stressful airport checks.

As India's wedding



season kicks off, many UAE expats are travelling home to attend family celebrations, but growing concerns over customs checks are making them think twice about carrying real gold. For many NRIs, jewellery is deeply tied

SEBI eases re-KYC process for NRIs; no physical presence clause

MUMBAI: Market regulator SEBI on Wednesday eased the re-KYC process for NRIs by removing the requirement for them to be physically present in India during digital verification. The relaxation is aimed at making the re-KYC process smoother and more accessible for NRIs.

Re-KYC (Re-Know Your

Customer) is the process of updating or revalidating a customer's KYC details with a financial institution or intermediary. In its circular, SEBI has decided to modify the existing provisions to ease re-KYC access for NRIs after receiving references from multiple stakeholders. Under this,

ical location of the client being in India during digital onboarding has been relaxed for undertaking re-KYC for existing clients, the regulator said. The digital KYC app will still need to use tools like random prompts, time-stamping and geo-tagging to ensure the interaction is genuine. While onboarding still re-

quires an India-based location, re-KYC for existing NRI clients can now

be done from abroad. The app must also verify that the GPS location matches.

Saudi may ease liquor rules

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia is now planning to allow non-Muslim foreign residents to purchase alcohol, a move that was previously limited only to foreign diplomats, Bloomberg reported.

Which non-Muslims foreign residents will be eligible? According to the report, non-Muslim foreign residents, who have

a monthly earning of SR50,000 (\$13,300), will be allowed to make purchases. These residents must hold a special type of permit under the Premium Residency programme. The residents will be required to prove their income by showing a salary certificate

to gain entry to the country's only liquor outlet, located in Riyadh.

Dubai's most expensive table?...

(Cont. from page - 2)
free entry for children under 3. "Royal Circle" seats offering closer views of the stage begin at Dh8,500 for adults, according to Emarat Al Youm. For guests seeking a more exclusive experience, the resort is offering its Sky Suite at Dh200,000 for 10 guests, with the option to add extra guests at Dh20,000 per person. The package includes a private area, personalised service and a luxury dining experience designed for high-net-worth attendees.

Across Dubai, luxury and mid-range restaurants have begun accepting early reservations for New Year's Eve, and some venues have already reached full capacity, despite the holiday being more than three weeks away.

A survey conducted by Emarat Al Youm across 20 hotel restaurants found offerings priced from Dh175 to Dh14,000, with premium locations such as Palm Jumeirah, Downtown Dubai, Jumeirah Beach and Dubai Marina commanding the highest rates, particularly for tables with views of Burj Khalifa or waterfront fireworks. One luxury hotel on Palm Jumeirah launched a Dh14,000 New Year's Eve package for adults, with Dh8,500 rates for children under 13. Another beachfront venue priced

its curated menu between Dh6,000 and Dh12,500 per person.

US revokes 85,000 visas in 2025

WASHINGTON: The US has revoked 85,000 visas across multiple categories this year, a senior State Department official said, describing the action as part of an intensified effort to protect American communities and enforce public-safety standards.

"We've revoked 85,000 visas of all categories, including more than 8,000 students, which is more than double the numbers the year before," said a State Department official in response to a question. "Some of the top reasons why we revoked the visas were DUIs (driving under the influence of liquor), as-aults and theft, which to-

gether account for almost half of the revocations in the past year. These are people who pose a direct threat to our communities' safety and we do not want to have them in our country," said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The official said the administration's visa-vetting posture remains stringent, particularly for applicants from high-risk environments.

On Afghanistan, the official said: "I think this administration has always had concerns with the security in Afghanistan [following the withdrawal] and making sure that we

can appropriately vet and validate that visa applicants won't be a threat."

Reiterating that security checks will not be rushed, the official added: "We will take as much time as it takes, and we will not issue a visa until we are sure the applicant does not pose a threat to Americans' safety and security."

The official was also asked whether participating in fact-checking or content-moderation efforts — including work for social-media or civil-society organizations — could be grounds for a visa denial under the Trump administration's recently established policies.