



# OVERSEAS NEWS AND EMPLOYMENT

PASSPORT TO GLOBAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES



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## Etihad to hire 2,000 pilots, cabin crew

**ABU DHABI:** Etihad Airways will recruit up to 2,000 pilots, cabin crew and mechanics this year as it prepares for expansion in 2025 when the airline plans to add 15 more planes to its fleet. “We’re going to be hiring about 1,500 to 2,000 people this year to prepare for 2025,” Antonioaldo Neves, CEO of Etihad Airways, said.

“In 2025, we are getting 15 more planes. And I need pilots, mechanics, and flight attendants for those planes.

So, the second half of this year is going to be all about training pilots and flight attendants for 2025.” Etihad will boost the number of flights, frequencies, and destinations as it seeks to capitalise on the positive momentum seen in passenger traffic last year. The airline’s passenger load factor rose to 86pc in 2023, up from 82pc in 2022. Etihad announced its results for 2023, recording a total revenue of Dh20.3 billion, a net profit of Dh525 million,

and Dh1.4 billion operating result, driven by Dh4 billion year-on-year growth in passenger revenue.

Neves expects the passenger demand to continue and hopes to deliver new planes on time. “I want more people flying. For that, I want more planes. The lack of planes in the market is a problem. So, that’s making the load factors very high. In March, in six days, my load factors are 92pc. It’s crazy.” Neves is optimistic

about tripling the passenger number from 10 million in 2022 to more than 30 million by 2030. “The journey ahead of us is amazing. We’re on the right track to triple the size of the airline and catch about 30 to 33 million passengers in the next six years. In 2024, we are going to be growing something from 25 to 30pc. If we get the planes, there is no reason why we wouldn’t be able to deliver 17 million passengers [in 2024],” the CEO underlined.

## Vistara’s 50th destination

**DOHA:** Vistara, India’s leading full-service premium airline, jointly owned by the Tata Group and Singapore Airlines, commemorated a significant achievement with the successful inauguration of its 50th destination in Doha.

“Operating with the state-of-the-art Airbus A321neo aircraft, Vistara will offer direct flights four times weekly between Mumbai and Doha, featuring three distinct cabin classes: Business, Premium Economy and Economy,” a statement from Vistara said.

## Canada adds more jobs

**OTTAWA:** Canada’s economy added a net 40,700 jobs in February, more than double the expected gain, though wage growth slowed for a second consecutive month and the jobless rate ticked up to 5.8pc, data showed on Friday.

Analysts had forecast a net gain of 20,000 jobs and for the unemploy-

ment rate to edge up to 5.8pc from 5.7pc in January. The unemployment rate has been steady at that level for three of the past four months, Statistics Canada said. February’s job gains were driven by full-time work, where 70,600 positions were added, more than offsetting the 29,900 jobs shed in part-time work.

Still, population growth continued to outpace employment growth and led to a 0.1pc fall in the em-

ployment rate -- or the proportion of the population aged 15 and older who are employed. It was the fifth consecutive monthly decline, making it the longest period of consecutive decreases since April 2009. The annual growth in the average hourly wage of permanent employees -- a figure closely watched by the central bank -- slowed to 4.9pc from 5.3pc in Jan. It was the second

(Cont. on page-2)

## Dubai to tax foreign banks

**DUBAI:** Dubai issued a law mandating a 20pc annual tax on foreign banks operating in the emirate, with exceptions granted to those licensed within the Dubai International Financial Centre.

The law, which was passed by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, Vice President and Ruler of Dubai, governs the guidelines for determining taxable income and the protocols for filing tax returns.

It will also regulate the procedures for auditing tax returns and voluntary disclosures, as well as the responsibilities and procedures associated with tax audit proceedings, the office said.

The provision of the law covers all foreign banks that operate in Dubai, including special development zones and free zones. It said the corporate tax rate would be deducted from the an-

(Cont. on page-2)

FOREX RATES		
As on 11th Mar, 2024 (In rupees)		
Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	83.53	82.48
Euro	91.46	90.26
Australian Dollar	55.67	54.47
Japanese Yen	0.60	0.54
Canadian Dollar	62.33	61.13
Singapore Dollar	63.14	61.94
Swedish krona	9.08	7.29
UAE Dirham	23.01	22.36
Swiss Franc	95.32	93.52
British Pound	107.27	106.07
New Zealand Dollar	52.07	50.07
Thai Baht	2.44	2.24
Hong Kong Dollar	11.53	10.17
Saudi Arabian Riyal	22.76	21.81
Bahraini Dinar	225.73	211.73
Chinese Yuan	12.41	10.61
Danish Krone	12.64	11.64
Kuwaiti Dinar	275.65	259.65
Malaysian Ringgit	18.66	17.31
Omani Rial	220.78	208.78
Qatari Riyal	23.72	21.22
South African Rand	4.91	3.91

## Saudi expects more tourists after signing pact with Trip.com

**RIYADH:** An additional 3.5 lakh tourists are expected to visit Saudi Arabia after the Kingdom’s tourism authority entered into a partnership with global bookings firm Trip.com.

The deal was one of 14 signed by the organization at a trade show in Berlin, with agreements also reached with German low-cost airline Eurowings, Saudi carri-

er Flynas and new collaborations with Visit Bahrain, Visit Oman and Qatar Tourism. Saudi Tourism Authority’s participation in the event, held at ITB Berlin, came as the Kingdom celebrates achieving its Vision 2030 ambition of securing 100 million tourists a year seven years early thanks to a strong 2023.

Fahd Hamidaddin, CEO

of the authority, said: “Saudi’s participation in ITB Berlin has been one of the most successful in our history and will help turbocharge the remarkable growth our thriving tourism sector has already seen.

“With more than 55 partners from the tourism ecosystem attending the show, we secured more than 14 new agreements that will increase

our connectivity and ensure the world is aware of our dynamic and diverse destinations. “Saudi’s growth so far is just the start of our story, a

(Cont. on page-2)

**As the holy month of Ramadan begins, Management and Staff of Overseas News and Employment extend Ramadan Greetings to our readers and advertisers.**





# Dubai tenants will have to shell out more rents

**DUBAI:** The recent update to Dubai's Real Estate Regulatory Authority rent calculator is a double-edged sword for deal-hunting tenants, according to analysts who say the rise in rents will be balanced out by the growth of communities offering better value for money. Rents in Dubai surged 19pc year-on-year in 2023, compared with 27pc the previous year, property consultancy Cushman & Wakefield said in its latest market report.

The RERA calculator, which was recalibrated on March 1 to become more representative of open-market pricing, is revised periodically for

certain communities and buildings to reflect current market rental rates. It shows whether or not a rent increase is allowed and uses criteria such as location, property type, current rent and number of rooms, and works by comparing properties with similar ones nearby.

It said many tenants were opting to stay put because rental increases during renewals are much lower compared with signing new leases, but several renewing this year will face higher rent due to the adjustment in RERA's calculator.

"Last year, we observed rental ranges widen-

ing for some areas by increasing the top end of the allowed price increase," Haider Tuaima, director and head of real estate research at Dubai-based ValuStrat, told a TV channel. The residential rental market is on an upswing stage of the cycle. Therefore, increasing the upper end of the permitted rental range allows landlords to increase their rates closer to prevailing market rents and improve their yields in the process, "haider observed.

Cherif Sleiman, chief revenue officer of Property Finder, said the recent change in the rental index also reflects the efforts of RERA to bal-

ance a fair rent increase across different communities "while fostering a healthy environment for investors, ensuring competitive rental yields aligned with global standards".

"The nation's commitment to fostering long-term residency and investment has fuelled this trend, resulting in a growing demand and heightened interest in investment," Sleiman pointed out.

With many tenants with historically low rents set to face significant increases in their next renewal, John Lyons, managing director at Dubai-based Espace Real Estate, said it may

encourage more to a foothold on the property ladder. "This will increase the churn rate of rental stock within many communities, while also accelerating the trend of 2023, whereby many tenants decided to buy, opting for the lower monthly costs associated with home ownership," Lyons said. "Although the updated rent calculator will inevitably cause some level of disruption for many tenants, the great pivot of housing stock from the rental sector to the end-user sector will help to create increased levels of stability for Dubai's residential property market over the longer term."

## Doha hosts GCC panel meet

**DOHA:** Doha hosted the 41st meeting of the GCC Committee of Conformity Assessment (GCCA), an affiliate of the GCC Standardization Organisation (GSO), with the participation of all member countries. The two-day meeting discussed the follow-up on the decisions of the 40th GCCA meeting and the decisions of the 57th meeting of the GSO Technical Council, which was held in late January in Doha.

The attendees also dis-

cussed a GSO presidency memorandum on Final Draft Standards (FDS) — the technical regulations for electromagnetic compatibility, Gulf technical regulation for prohibition of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment and the GSO technical regulations project for machinery, safety components and lifting equipment, in preparation for submitting them for approval at the GCC level to achieve further safety for consumers and the environment.

Another GSO presidency memorandum on intra-regional trade obstacles was tackled. The meeting scrutinised a list of the top 100 traded commodities among the GCC countries, in a bid to remove technical obstacles to standardization and streamline trade exchange

among member states. Highlighting the GSO member states reports on following up on the implementation of the approved Gulf technical regulations, the Committee agreed to hold the sixth Gulf Open Day for economic operators (manufacturers and traders) on May 14, 2024 in Dubai and to provide presentations on the Member Countries' legislative systems and mechanisms to achieve product safety.

The Conformity Assessment aims to enact rules and mechanisms that guarantee the liberalization of intra-trade between the member countries and the rest of the world, work to remove technical obstacles to trade, and ensure the provision of a high level consumer protection against multiple forms of product and commercial fraud.

## Dubai to tax...

(Cont. from page-1)

nual 20pc tax if the foreign bank paid tax under the Corporate Tax Law. The chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai will issue a decision on breaches and impose penalties, according to the new law.

The total penalties imposed should not exceed Dh500,000 (\$136,147), the media office said in a statement, adding that the fine will be doubled in case of repeat breaches within two years, up to a maximum of Dh1 million. The director general of the department of Finance will issue the necessary decisions to implement the provisions of the new law, which will be published in the official gazette, the statement said.

## Saudi expects more tourists ...

(Cont. from page-1)

story which will be built on for years to come."

The agreement with Trip.com Group is Saudi Tourism Authority's largest global partnership to date and leverages the booking company's extensive network and technological expertise to promote the Kingdom's offerings to a worldwide audience. The authority's deal with

Flynas involves a new route by the carrier between Jeddah and Berlin launching from Sept 1, 2024, with three flights per week. This comes alongside an agreement between the Saudi Air Connectivity Program and Eurowings to launch two direct routes connecting Cologne and Berlin to Jeddah, with the goal of beginning operations in Oct, 2024.

## India worried about killing of students in US

**NEW DELHI:** India has offered assistance as its consulates in the US have reached out to its nationals studying there and assured them of all possible co-operation and help in case of any trouble following the recent deaths of Indian students in the US. More than five Indian and Indian-origin students have died in the US since the start of this year, highlighting the state of security and safety in the country.

The latest incident in a string of deaths of Indian students beginning this year came after Amarnath Ghosh, a dancer from Kolkata who was pursuing his PhD, was shot dead in Missouri. "Through our consulates in the US, we have done outreach with our stu-

dents there, guided them. We have also told them to immediately get in touch with either the embassy or the consulates in case of any trouble or situation so that we can take care of them in a better way," Minister of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a weekly media briefing.

Responding to a question on Ghosh, Jaiswal said that the police in Chicago have been investigating the case and the Indian consulate is in regular touch with the authorities there. "Once the investigation is completed, we will know more about the case and what caused the death. Our consulates are extending all possible cooperation on this case to the authorities there," Jaiswal said.

## Canada adds more....

(Cont. from page-1)

wants sustained evidence consecutive month of that inflation is heading wage deceleration and towards that target before it considers lowering the lowest rate since June, further signs that interest rates. Employment in goods sector decreased by a net 6,300 jobs, mainly in manufacturing and agriculture, while services sector gained a net 46,900 jobs, led by accommodation and food services and professional, scientific and technical services.

Canada's labor market is moderating. Employment growth lagging the rate of population growth has allowed supply to catch up with demand, as Bank of Canada (BoC) tries to cool inflation to a two per cent target. BoC



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## Free trade pact with Europe to create jobs

**NEW DELHI:** India and four European countries signed a free trade pact that will create one million jobs in the South Asian country in 15 years, Trade Minister Piyush Goyal said.

"It is the first-time in history of the world that we are inking an agreement with a binding commitment to invest \$100 billion in India from the EFTA countries," Goyal said at a signing ceremony. "Investor confidence in India is at an all-time high. The European bloc comprises Switzerland,

Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, none of which are members of the EU.

"India-Norway bilateral relations are stronger than ever before," Jan Christian Vestre, Norway's trade and industry minister, said. The economic pact has been 16

years in making and will be first-of-its kind where India will secure investment commitments under the agreement, Bloomberg earlier reported, adding to India's appeal as one of the most sought-after market for investors looking to diversify supply chains.

## Rains disrupt UAE flights

**DUBAI:** Some flights departing from Dubai International Airport (DXB) are experiencing delays of up to one to two hours due to the UAE's adverse weather conditions.

Flights from Abu Dhabi's Zayed International Airport (AUH) are also facing similar delays. Air Arabia Abu Dhabi 3L124 from Calicut (Kozhikode) arrived 30 minutes later than scheduled, Etihad Airways EY066 from Moscow arrived three hours later. Flight departures remain uninterrupted, according to the flight schedule on AUH's website. Almost all flights from Sharjah International Airport (SHJ) are operating as scheduled.

Heavy rains, accompanied by lightning and thunder, have been lashing the UAE since late Saturday night. The National Centre of Meteorology has recorded rainfall in varying intensities across the UAE - in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah and Ajman.

Dubai International has advised travellers to take extra time to arrive at DXB to avoid delays. In a statement on X, DXB said: "Adverse weather conditions are expected from today. Be sure to check your latest flight status with your airline, factor in extra time to travel to DXB and use the Dubai Metro where possible."

## Will Tata Sons embark on IPO?

**NEW DELHI:** On speculations that Tata Sons mega listing will unlock value among group entities and simplify the complex group structure, Tata Group stocks are on a roll and surged as high as 16pc on the BSE intra-day.

"Tata group stock fundamental long-term stories are intact and they have outperformed in recent times. But the recent story of those stocks being in action like Tata Chem and others are based of Tata Sons, the holding company of all Tata companies, for which few reports say it is required by the RBI to list by Sept 2025. This has fuelled fresh fire in the group stocks due to cross holding structures," said Prashanth Tapse, Sr VP Research analyst at Mehta equities.

Extending its win-

ning streak for the sixth straight session, Tata Chemicals shares surged 14pc intraday to hit a 52-week high of Rs 1,349 on the NSE before settling at Rs 1,311.60 apiece, up 11.30pc. The scrip has surged more than 40pc in the last six as a report by equity research firm Spark Capital recently stated that Tata Chemicals' 2.5pc holding in Tata Sons could potentially amount to Rs 19,850 crore or 80pc of its market capitalisation. Besides Tata Chemicals, Tata Motors, Tata Power, Tata Steel, Rallis India, Tata Power, Nelco and Tata Investment Corporation marched ahead and witnessed strong buying on Thursday. Among the 17 active listed Tata stocks, only Titan (down 0.6pc) closed with a cut on Thursday.

Shares of Rallis India, where Tata Chemicals is the promoter, surged nearly 16pc to hit a new one-year high of Rs 294.25. Tata Investment Corp shares were locked in the upper circuit for the sixth straight day, surging five per cent to close at Rs 9,756.85. The stock has advanced 77pc in the last one month.

Mehta added: "Market participants say that Tata Sons is expected to raise Rs 55,000 crore via an IPO and many of the known Tata group names hold stakes in Tata Sons. With one example Tata Chem's, it hold 2.53pc of Tata Sons and that is Rs 30,000 crore in value, the current mcap of Tata Chem is Rs 29,000 Cr which had fuelled the rally in last few days like wise in other group stocks as well."

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# GULF FAQs

## Can tenants seek lower rent after signing contract?

**I** recently signed a rent contract for a two-BR apartment in Dubai. However, rents in my building have dipped for some reason and others have renewed their contracts for significantly lesser annual rents. Can I renegotiate lower rents in light of this?

Pursuant to your queries, it is assumed that you have registered the rent contract of your two-bedroom apartment with the Real Estate Regulatory Agency (RERA) through Ejari registration and you are currently in possession of the said rented apartment. Therefore, the provisions of Law No. 33 of 2008 Amending Law No. 26 of 2007 Regulating the Relationship Between Landlords and Tenants in the Emirate of Dubai are applicable.

In Dubai, both a landlord and a tenant need to abide by the terms and conditions mentioned in the signed tenancy contract which is duly registered with RERA. Therefore, the rent agreed in the tenancy contract should be paid by the tenant. This is in accordance with Article 4 of the Amended Dubai Rent Law, which states:

“1. The contractual relationship between a landlord and a tenant shall be regulated by a rent contract which includes a description of the rented real property that leaves no room for uncertainty; the purpose of the rent; the term of the rent contract; the rent and its payment method; and the name of the real property owner if the landlord is not the owner.

“2. All rent contracts related to

real property which is governed by the provisions of this law, and any amendments thereto, shall be registered with RERA.”

Based on the aforementioned law, as you have already agreed to the rent with the landlord in the tenancy contract, it may not be possible for you to challenge the same, even though the rents in your locality have significantly reduced.

You may consider negotiating the rent with your landlord, however, any reduction in rent for the validity of the tenancy contract is at the discretion of the landlord. However, prior to renewing your tenancy contract, if the rents in your locality are lower than the current rent, you may request the landlord to reduce the rent based on the RERA regulated rent calculator as mentioned in Article 13 of the Amended Dubai Rent Law, which states: “For the purposes of renewing a rent contract, the landlord and tenant may prior to the expiry of the lease contract, amend any of its terms or reconsider increasing or reducing the rent. If the landlord and tenant fail to reach an agreement in this regard, the Tribunal may determine the fair rent, taking into account the criteria stipulated in Article 9 of this Law.” In the event there is no amicable decision between you and the landlord on the rent for the renewed period, you may approach the Dubai Rental Dispute Centre to decide on the rent of your rented apartment.

## Landlord refuses to repair building: What to do?

**I** have rented a one-room apartment in Dubai. Due to a leakage in my water heater recently, the apartment was in a mess. I have requested maintenance, but the landlord has not responded. I am afraid that the heater will explode. In such situations, what do I do?

Pursuant to your queries, as you are residing in a rented apartment in Dubai, the provisions of Law No. 26 of 2007 Regulating the Relationship Between Landlords and Tenants in the Emirate of Dubai, Law No. 33 of 2008 Amending Law No. 26 of 2007 Regulating the Relationship between Landlords and Tenants in the Emirate of Dubai and Federal Decree Law No. 31 of 2021 on the Issuance of the Crimes and Penalties Law are applicable.

In Dubai, it is the responsibility of a landlord to provide rented premises to a tenant in good condition. This is in accordance with Article 15 of the Amended Dubai Rent Law, which states: “A landlord shall be bound to hand over the real property in a good condition which allows the tenant to fully use it as stated in the rent contract.” Moreover, it is the responsibility of a landlord to carry out the repair works and maintenance of the rented premises unless otherwise it is stated in the tenancy contract that the tenant is liable to repair and maintain the same. This is in accordance with Article 16 of the Dubai Rent Law, which states, “Unless otherwise agreed by the parties, a landlord shall, during the term of the rent contract, be responsible for the real property maintenance works and for repairing any breakdown or defect the tenant’s full intended use of the real property.”

## Ramadan greetings from UAE president



**ABU DHABI:** UAE President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has sent congratulatory messages to the kings, Emirs and presidents of Arab and Islamic nations on the advent of Ramadan.

His Highness Sheikh Mohamed wished the leaders

and their people continued good health and well-being, and further progress and prosperity for Arab and Islamic nations. Dubai Ruler His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Presidential Court sent similar messages to Arab and Muslim leaders on the holy occasion.

## Ramadhan work hours in Oman

**MUSCAT:** The official remote work for the employees whose nature of work allows them to opt for this option and the departments of the state’s administrative apparatus will be flexible, in that unit. In all cases, starting from 9 am to 2 pm, and the head of the departments will determine the hours of attendance that suit the nature of the work.

The shift options are: 7 am to 12 noon, 8 am to 1 pm, 9 am to 2 pm and 10 am to 3 pm.

The head of the department may implement

The maximum working hours for Muslim workers shall be six hours per day in private sector establishments or 30 working hours a week.

## Etihad Airways plans IPO

**ABU DHABI:** “Going to be ready” for the IPO “Etihad Airways CEO Antonoaldo Neves said and stressed the decision to go public belongs to the shareholders and not to the company management.

“We are working so hard to make sure that the company ticks all the boxes. So, that if one day the shareholder decides to do it, we are ready. The management has to be ready to do whenever the shareholder decides,” Neves said and pointed out that Etihad has the “obligation to be ready” whenever it’s the time for an IPO.

“If and when the shareholder starts the process, we will only know one month before that because we have to file an intention to float. There is no filing today about that. And if one day it happens, three, six months, one, two years, we’re going to be ready.”

Neves noted the team has to work hard to be ready for an IPO. If the shareholder decides it’s time to tap into that pool of capital, I need to be ready. I don’t want to be in a position where the shareholder calls me and says: “Well, I want to do it in 30 days”. And I tell: “I need one year”. It’s not a good position to be in as a CEO. So, you need to be ready. If you’re ready for an IPO, then you are a good company. What we’re doing here is making sure that Etihad is a great company.



# Power of passports and India's ranking

By Sajjan MS

**T**he power of passports? So, does the passport have such a power? What is the fact base behind ranking passports with these words? Who conducts such a "force test" or ranking regarding the passport?

Of course there is such a ranking nowadays. It is on the basis of that ranking the usages such as Powerful Passport, Strength of Passport etc have come into being.

The Henley Passport Index (HPI), a global leader in world's most successful residence and citizenship programs, is the authoritative agency to rank the world's passports. The ranking is based on the number of destinations their holders can travel without a prior visa and is conducted exclusively relied on official data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA). HPI include 199 passports and 227 travel destinations in the world in the index to complete this ranking. They also

consider the sum of the national GDP shares of global GDP for each of the destinations to which its passport holders have visa-free access including their own GDP. The maximum possible score is 100, representing 100pc of global GDP.

In short, assessing and ranking the strength of a country's passport is by taking into account the visa-free/visa-on-arrivals (without a prior visa) to number of destinations in the world. The Henley Passport Index is updated on a monthly basis.

## Powerful passports

The world's first 10 powerful passports, according to the Henley Passport Index-2024 (as

of March, 2024), respectively are: Singapore, Japan, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Austria,

and Spain jointly hold the first place in terms of most powerful passports. Passport holders of these countries can visit 194 countries without visa. Finland, Netherlands, Sweden and South Korea are at second place with visa-free access to 193 countries, while Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Britain and Luxembourg are at third place with visa-free access to 192 countries.

## India's ranking

As per the HPI 2024, India is ranked at the 80th position, with visa-free access to 62 countries. There has been an improvement in India's ranking on the HPI and has risen to 80th position from 85th position

in the beginning of 2024. The powerfulness of Indian passport is increasing every month. It is an indisputable fact that India is emerging as a major economic power. overseas employment trips and foreign visit trends of Indian human resources, which are world-class in terms of experience and technology, have increased significantly in these years, benefiting the Indian passport as well. The strength of the Indian passport has continuously improved over the years. The Indian passport was ranked 87th in the HPI in 2022. In 2023, Indian passport was ranked 80th. Now Indian passport is at 82nd position. The reason for the lower ranking of the Indian passport is not actually because it is less powerful, but because of the increased power of some other countries' passports. However, the number of countries offering visa-free access to Indian passports remains unchanged from last year.



## More hiring by Dubai businesses

**DUBAI:** Dubai businesses, especially those in retail, construction and tourism -- are adding more staff at the fastest rate in more than eight years, helped by new orders and demand from consumers. The trend became obvious all through February, based on the latest PMI data from S&P Global.

In fact, Dubai's non-oil private sector turned in its best performance since May 2019, with higher activity growth of "another upturn in new order volumes, as firms enjoyed favourable market conditions and a positive response to greater sales efforts".

"The latest results prompted companies to expand their staffing numbers at the fastest rate in eight-and-a-half year," says the report. The Feb

pick up in jobs comes after three- to four months of relatively subdued hiring, as businesses tried to work out ways to offset costs. Plus, some hiring decisions were delayed as businesses factored in the newly introduced corporate tax requirements. But Feb seems to have showed a completely revised push towards new staff intakes.

Construction and project management continues to add jobs, as does real estate, where the offplan growth and new launches continue to spur activity. Travel and tourism is heading for another strong first quarter. Retail sector hiring has been more uneven, with new businesses being launched being offset by job losses at some of the established entities.

## Oman hosts world's largest tourism exhibition

**BERLIN:** In official partnership with the Sultanate of Oman represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the events of the Berlin International Tourism Fair (ITB) 2024 will kick on Monday in the German capital, Berlin. The fair is considered the world's largest tourism exhibition and a platform for knowledge exchange and expanding business networks in the tourism industry and it will last for several days.

This official partnership reaffirms Oman's plans to develop the tourism sector and enhance its position as a global tourist destination. It is an ideal opportunity to showcase Oman's tourism resources, products, services and experiences, thereby contributing to

tourism promotion and increasing the influx of more tourists from export markets as well as promoting the diverse investment opportunities recommended by the Omani Tourism Strategy to contribute to achieving the investment targets of the tourism sector in the context of the goals of "Oman 2040 Vision".

It is expected that about 160 countries and 5,000 exhibitors will participate in the fair, attracting around 1.2 lakh visitors from various countries around the world, as well as 7,000 representatives of global media and 1,500 travel bloggers from 35 countries to cover the fair. Azzan bin Qasim al Busaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage

and Tourism for Tourism, Azzan bin Qasim al Busaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, stated that this official partnership represents a milestone in enhancing Oman's position on the global tourism map, reflecting its commitment to expanding the base of international visitors. At the same time, Oman is working to diversify its tourism products, enhance economic activity through investment in the sector, and highlight Oman's unique strategic location, natural beauty, stunning landscapes, and rich cultural heritage; making it an ideal destination for tourists seeking unique and amazing experiences.