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Strengthening tourism bridges India-Tokat region; Turkey explores cultural collaborations

TOKAT: In a significant step towards enhancing International Tourism collaboration, VS Abdulkareem, CMD Flycreative Online Ltd, met with Abdl Dolek, Tokat provincial Director of culture and tourism, ministry of culture and tourism, Turkey during a B2B event organized by Travelshop Turkey at Tokat, to discuss strategic initiatives aimed at promoting tourism traffic from India to the culturally vibrant Tokat region-Turkey.

The discussion centered around developing structured tourism linkages, promoting heritage and cultural circuits and encouraging engagements between Indian tour oper-

ators and tourism stakeholders in Tokat.

Emphasis was laid on highlighting Tokat's rich historical legacy, architectural heritage, traditional arts and experiential travel opportunities that resonate strongly with Indian outbound travellers

Both sides expressed optimism about strengthening tourism co-operation and exploring collaborative and promotional activities to position Tokat as an emerging destination in the Indian travel market. The meeting marks a positive development in expanding tourism ties and fostering cultural connectivity between India and Turkey.



CMD Flycreative Online Ltd VS Abdulkareem with Abdl Dolek, Tokat Provincial Director of culture and tourism, ministry of culture and tourism, Turkey.

India reviews progress on safe, orderly migration



Speakers, dignitaries at the National Consultation: India's initiatives on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, in New Delhi.

NEW DELHI: A National Consultation was held in New Delhi on Feb 9 to review its initiatives under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM India) ahead of the International

Migration Review Forum 2026. Since adopting the GCM India in 2018, India has strengthened migrant welfare through ethical recruitment, skills recognition, digital governance and consular support,

aligning its efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The consultation will bring together government and civil society stakeholders to reflect on progress, share best prac-

tices, and identify emerging priorities in labour mobility and migrant protection. Organised by the Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration, the di-

alogue aims to reinforce a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to migration governance and shape India's future co-operation in a rapidly evolving global labour market.

Iran consulate celebrates Islamic Revolution Day

MUMBAI: On the occasion of the 47th Anniversary of the Victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and Iran's National Day, a commemorative reception was held on Monday (Feb 9) at

the picturesque Jade Garden, Mumbai, bringing together a distinguished gathering of guests to celebrate this historic milestone with the Iranian nation.

The event was attended by senior government officials, consuls general, representatives (**Cont. on page - 6**)



His Excellency Motlagh, Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Mumbai, speaking at the 47th Anniversary celebration of the Victory of the Islamic Revolution in Mumbai.



HE Motlagh with Dr Gawande, Chief Protocol Officer.

SriLankan Airlines plans to operate 100 flights in a week to India

NEW DELHI: SriLankan Airlines is set to significantly deepen its footprint on the Indian market, aiming to increase its flight frequency from 90 to 100 weekly flights by the end of 2026. The island country's flag carrier also aims to add one or two potential destinations in the current year.

India is the largest tourism market for Sri Lanka. In 2025, Sri Lanka recorded around 23 lakh inbound tourists, including 5.31 lakh Indian tourists, which makes 23pc of the total figure. SriLankan Airlines' regional manager

for India, Bangladesh and Nepal Fawzan Fareid told a TV channel that the carrier aims to strengthen its operations in India by enhancing frequency to the existing nine cities to 100 weekly flights and also introducing one or two new destinations this year.

The move underscores India's status as the airline's single largest and most critical source market. Currently, SriLankan Airlines operates 90 weekly flights to nine Indian cities, including New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Kochi, Madurai, Hyderabad (**Cont. on page - 2**)



Tourism needs skilling

India's tourism sector is entering a new age with the recently presented Union budget 2026–27 laying out an ambitious vision – from enhanced connectivity and cultural circuit development to job creation and workforce skilling. There is an urgent need to modernise tourism education and human capital development to align with the sector's rapid transformation.

The UN Tourism Digital Transformation Report emphasises that technological fluency is now essential for destination competitiveness. Incorporating digital tourism and data literacy into core curricula – rather than relegating them to optional levels – is imperative. Effective reform will require co-ordinated governance. There is a skills mismatch and the budget is addressing these issues.

The budget underscores tourism, transport and skills development as central to national growth, setting the tone for an accelerated push to strengthen India's travel ecosystem. The highlight is to train 10,000 tourist guides to enhance on-ground visitor experiences and deliver higher service standards at key destinations.

The budget also outlined wide-ranging tourism skilling initiatives, touching upon hospitality education, heritage and nature-based experiences and digital documentation of cultural sites through a national destination knowledge grid.

Tourism today includes digital engagement, sustainability governance, crisis management, destination branding, experience design and community-inclusive development. According to UN Tourism, nearly 75pc of emerging tourism jobs will require hybrid competencies that blend technology, sustainability awareness and strategic thinking.

The World Travel and Tourism Council's India Economic Impact Report 2024 estimates that tourism contributes over seven per cent of India's GDP and supports more than 43 million jobs. Yet, employers across the industry report a persistent skills mismatch – a gap between what candidates are trained for and what the workplace demands. This tension undermines service quality, restricts productivity gains and limits India's capacity to compete on the global tourism stage. Budget's initiatives hint at the right direction but remain insufficient without systematic educational reform.

Institutions such as Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITM) are already aligned with this vision. Established under the Ministry of Tourism, IITM serves as a national hub for tourism education, skills development and applied research, with campuses across different regions. Strengthening its role, and replicating its best practices across state universities and national institutes, will be crucial for creating a continuum of quality tourism education that is both competitive and contextually relevant. The OECD Tourism Trends and Policies Report 2023 highlights climate resilience, over tourism mitigation and ecosystem stewardship as priority issues for global tourism.

Tourism growth should not come at the cost of environmental degradation and social discontent. Digital transformation is another frontier. Technologies such as AI-based visitor analytics, smart destination platforms, immersive digital marketing and heritage interpretation systems are rapidly shaping traveller decisions. The UN Tourism Digital Transformation Report emphasises that technological fluency is now essential for destination competitiveness.

The ministry of tourism, higher education authorities and the National Skill Development Corporation must collaborate to establish outcome-based education standards aligned with the National Skills Qualification Framework. This alignment can elevate certification credibility, improve job market signalling, and ensure that graduate competencies match industry expectations. India now stands at a strategic crossroads. Budget 2026's tourism measures are a positive starting point, but long-term success will depend on whether policy prioritises human capital with the same vigour as physical infrastructure.

LIPSYNCH

"The traveller views what he sees, the tourist sees what he has come to see."

----- G.K. Chesterton

IndiGo assures full compliance with revised pilot duty norms

MUMBAI: IndiGo has informed aviation regulator DGCA that it is putting in place all required operational, rostering and monitoring mechanisms to ensure full adherence to revised pilot duty norms, after facing regulatory action over large-scale disruptions in Dec.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) outlined the airline's preparedness, a day after the temporary exemption granted to IndiGo under the new Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) norms came to an end. The regulator said excessive optimisation of operations, lack of regulatory preparedness, gaps in system software support and weaknesses in management structure and operational control were among the main factors behind the disruptions. Following this, DGCA had reduced IndiGo's winter schedule by 10pc.

The airline had cancelled 2,507 flights between Dec 3 and 5, prompting DGCA to allow limited relaxations in implementing the revised FDTL norms until Feb 10. In its statement, DGCA said IndiGo has conveyed

SriLankan Airlines plans to operate 100 flights...

(Cont. from page - 1) **COCHIN:** SriLankan Airlines has announced plans to increase its weekly flights to India to 100, starting from March 2026. The airline manages a fleet of 23 aircraft including A330-300 wide body as well as A320-200, A321Neo and A320 narrow body aircraft.

"For a small airline like SriLankan Airlines, 90 flights a week to India is a huge number. In 2026, we want to cross 100 weekly flights by strengthening the existing nine destinations while looking at adding one or two potential new destinations.

We are very carefully evaluating, crunching data about where traffic is originating from, captive market size, etc. Based on that, we have realised that it is feasible for us to strengthen the existing cities," said Fareid.



that it "shall be fully prepared to comply with the statutory provisions and to implement the approved FDTL scheme dated Oct 9, 2025 upon expiry of the exemptions."

The airline also stated that all necessary operational, rostering and monitoring arrangements are being put in place to ensure complete compliance with the approved FDTL scheme from Feb 11, 2026, the regulator said. The exemp-

tions were related to pilots' night duty time and night landings. DGCA said these relaxations were granted to stabilise flight operations and were subject to specific conditions, including submission of hourly operational data and weekly or fortnightly performance reports. IndiGo's domestic market share fell to 59.6 pc in Dec from 63.6pc in Nov. The carrier currently operates about 2,200 flights a day.

Canada's work permit process for doctors waiting for PR

TORONTO: Canada has announced a 14-day work permit processing for medical doctors while waiting for permanent residence. Canada is making the path to permanent residence simpler for international medical doctors to support a stable healthcare system for Canadians.

There are five options to get permanent residence

through Express Entry and regional, provincial and territorial programmes and a faster 14-day work permit processing for medical doctors nominated by a province or territory, so they can work while waiting for permanent residence. The foreign medical doctors can also include their family members in their application.

Canada's work permit process for doctors waiting for PR

"We understand that there is a huge potential but we are very careful deploying capacities into those cities. You can't have one frequency a week, you need to have a daily service for it to become a product. The support from the market always remains a question whether there will be traffic from those areas to Colombo on a regular basis. We are doing our assessment at present and I don't rule out that we pull out one of the destinations very soon," he said.

Focus on Mumbai

While Chennai is the largest market for SriLankan Airlines, it operates 14 flights per week from Mumbai to Colombo while its competitors like IndiGo also operate double daily flights and Air India oper-

ates one daily flight. While the route has about 18,000 seats available weekly, the number of weekly departures is only around 8,000 to 9,000. The airline claimed that it holds 60pc market share on the route.

"Mumbai is one of our primary destinations. It is a huge market but the departures out of Mumbai are relatively lower than the capacity provided. In our perception, over capacity is being given to this route. However, we have a healthy cabin factor out of Mumbai and will continue with two frequencies," he said, adding that SriLankan Airlines is the only carrier operating a wide body A330-300 aircraft on the route, making it an attractive factor for the passengers.

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| Euro | 106.43 | 108.72 |
| Japanese Yen | 58.99 | 59.93 |
| Swiss Franc (CHF) | 116.21 | 118.75 |
| Canadian Dollar | 65.96 | 67.48 |
| Australian Dollar | 63.93 | 65.33 |
| Norwegian Krone | 9.38 | 9.66 |
| Swedish Krona | 10.01 | 10.3 |
| New Zealand Dollar | 54.16 | 55.39 |
| Hong Kong Dollar | 11.35 | 11.71 |
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NEW DELHI: In the latest update of the Henley Passport Index for 2026, the Indian passport achieved a significant milestone by reclaiming the 75th position globally. This specific rank is a notable callback to India's standing in 2008 and 2009, marking a return to a level of mobility last

India's passport hits 75th rank

seen nearly two decades ago. While the passport currently allows Indian citizens visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 56 destinations, this latest jump represents a sharp recovery from the 85th position held just a year prior. Despite this 10-spot climb, the Indian passport still sits four ranks shy of its historical peak in 2006, when it reached 71st place. India's journey on the index has been characterised by notable fluctua-

tion over the last 20 years. After reaching its record high of 71st in 2006, the ranking gradually drifted downward, hitting 88th in 2015 and a low of 90th in 2021 during the height of global travel restrictions. However, the recent surge to 75th in early 2026 suggests a period of strengthening diplomatic ties and proactive foreign policy. While current rankings show a gradual upward trend, the data indicates that India continues to trail several of its emerging-market peers in terms of total visa-free access.

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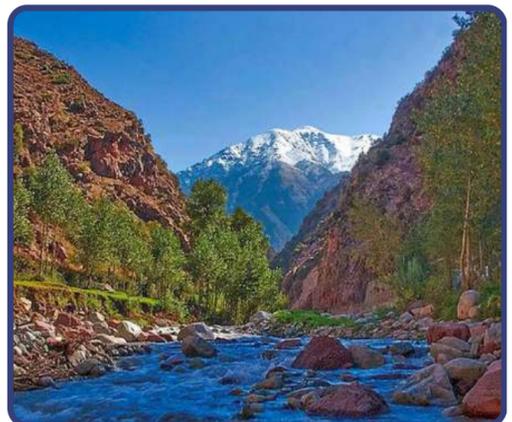
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GULF FAQs

How to file complaint against teacher for corporal punishment?

The teacher of my cousin slapped him on the face during class. The school terminated the teacher. My question is: What procedures should my cousin take against the teacher?

Your cousin has the right to file a complaint against the teacher with the KHDA (Knowledge and Human Development Authority), as well as a criminal com-

plaint with the Public Prosecution. Article (390) of Federal Law by Decree No. (31) of 2021, Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law, states that a penalty of incarceration and a fine shall be imposed on anyone who commits an assault on the physical integrity of another person in any manner whatsoever, which leads to a disease or the inability to carry out

personal activities for more than 20 days. The penalty shall be incarceration for a period not exceeding one year and a fine not exceeding Dh 10,000 if the results of the assault are not as grave as described in the preceding paragraph.

The same law confirms in Article (394/2) that "the penalty shall be incarceration for a period not exceeding two years and a



fine if the crime causes permanent disability or if the crime is committed as a result of the perpetrator's violation of the duties imposed by the princi-

ples of his job, profession, or craft." After concluding the criminal case, you may file a compensation case against the teacher and the school.

How non-Muslim expats can register will in UAE?

I am a non-Muslim expat and am just exploring the processes and documentation for writing my will. Can you please offer some guidance in this regard?

In the UAE, non-Muslims may apply the provisions of the UAE Personal Status Law for non-Muslims in accordance with Article 1(1) of the Federal Decree Law No. 41 of 2022 on Civil Personal Status Law, which states:

"The provisions of this Decree Law shall apply to non-Muslims who are national citizens of the UAE and to non-Muslim foreigners residing in the state, unless any of them adheres to the application of the law of their home country, with regards to the articles of marriage, divorce, inheritance, wills, and proof of parentage, without prejudice to the provisions of Articles (12), (13), (15), (16) and (17) of Federal Law No. 5 of 1985 referred to above."

Based on the provisions of the UAE Personal Status Law for non-Muslims, non-Muslims may register a will as per their choice and register a will through the courts of the respective emirate in the UAE, offering wills registration ser-

vices. This is in accordance with Article 11(1) of the UAE Personal Status Law for non-Muslims, which states:

"A legator may leave a will with all his assets in the state to anyone of his/her choice according to the controls set out by the Implementing Regulations of this Decree Law." In addition, the registration of wills of non-Muslim individuals in Dubai may follow the provisions of Law No. 15 of 2017 Concerning the Administration of Estates and Implementation of Wills of Non-Muslims in the Emirate of Dubai, specifically Article 3 and Article 6(a).

Article -3 of Dubai Law No. 15 of 2017 states: "This Law will apply to all wills and estates of non-Muslims in the Emirate, including in the Dubai International Financial Centre."

Meanwhile, Article-6(a) of Dubai Law No. 15 of 2017 states: "A register known as the 'Register of Wills of non-Muslims' will be created at the Dubai Courts and the DIFC Courts for the purpose of registering Wills of non-Muslims."

Following the above provisions of the Dubai Law No-15 of 2017, a non-Muslim resident in Dubai may register his

or her will at the Dubai Courts or the DIFC Courts Wills Service Centre of the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC).

A will to be registered in Dubai Courts or DIFC must include the details of the executor(s) and/or beneficiaries of the testator's properties and assets, including but not limited to all of the testator's movable and immovable properties, tangible and intangible properties. This also includes, but is not limited to, real estate properties,



shares in businesses and legal entities, bank accounts and the funds held in these accounts, social media accounts, intellectual property, and other matters based in the UAE or outside the UAE.

With respect to the registration of wills at the DIFC Wills Service Centre, Article 9(1) of DIFC Wills and Probate Registry Rules sets out the requirements for the registration of non-Muslim wills. The provisions read

as follows: "These rules shall apply only to Wills: a. of non-Muslim individuals over the Age of Majority; b. 1) that are in a form as set out in Schedule 1, in the English language, in writing;

2) Witnessed by at least two witnesses of the age of majority, such persons being either physically or virtually present in front of the Registrar or an Authorised Officer at the time of witnessing;

c) signed (in person) by the Testator; d. that ap-

At the DIFC Wills Service Centre, a testator may include all his estate within and outside the UAE. This is in accordance with Article-11 of the DIFC WPR Rules, which states:

"A Will may give or dispose of Immovable and Movable Property, located in any part of the world, to which the testator is entitled at the time of his death, whether the testator became entitled to it before or after the registration of his will, and shall not govern succession to any other property."

Furthermore, a non-Muslim individual may also register his or her will with Abu Dhabi Global Markets Court (ADGM Courts).

A non-Muslim expat in the UAE may also register his/her will at the consulate or embassy of his or her own country, if such service is available.

Therefore, based on the aforementioned provisions of law, you may register your will for your estate in the UAE before the Notary Public at the Dubai Courts, Abu Dhabi Judicial Department, Ministry of Justice, DIFC Wills Service Centre or the ADGM Court. You may also register your will at the embassy or consulate of your home country, if the service is available.

point Executors over the Age of a Guardian, if at all, for a minor who is habitually a resident with the testator, in Dubai or Ras Al Khaimah;

f) that are deposited and (at the time of death) remain registered with the Registry; and (g) that state that the Testator intends administration and succession to the property dealt with by the will to be governed by these rules and the laws of the DIFC."

AURA GLOBAL SCHOOLS: A LUMINARY IN CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

Aura Global Schools, Perinthalmanna, Kerala, established under the patronage of Aura Academic Institutions Private Limited and guided by the far-sighted stewardship of Mr KK Ashraf — has steadily crystallized into a formidable force within the evolving panorama of quality education. Rooted in innovation and propelled by an unflinching commitment to intellectual refinement and ethical formation, the institution continues to recalibrate benchmarks in scholastic distinction and holistic enrichment.

A resplendent hallmark of the academic year 2025–26 was the school's Annual Day celebration, conceived as an immersive literary sojourn under the theme "Journey Through English Literature." Aptly and po-



Aura Global Schools, Perinthalmanna, Kerala, celebrated its annual day function. Guided by KK Ashraf, the Aura Global Schools is presided over by Principal Dr. Sweety S. Pulikkottil.

etically titled Inkspire 26 – Where Words Become Wonders, the event unfolded as an ode to the perennial legacy of English literature—meandering from the whimsical enchantment of classic fairy tales to the philosophical gravitas of Shakespearean drama. Deliberate measures ensured the participation of every student, transforming the celebration into an all-embracing forum that fortified self-belief, kindled

creative ardour and amplified expressive prowess. The stage transfigured into a living palimpsest, where narratives transcended print and found pulsating life through youthful imagination.

Presiding over this thriving institution is Principal Dr. Sweety S. Pulikkottil, whose sagacious and dynamic leadership is bolstered by a constellation of highly qualified and skilled educators. Their collec-



tive devotion to personalised instruction, character moulding and lifelong scholarship has positioned Aura Global Schools as an incubator of confident, competent, and conscientious individuals.

Adroitly negotiating the confluence of legacy and innovation, the school adopts a judicious amalgam of time-honoured pedagogical conventions and avant-garde educational strategies. A pronounced emphasis on value inculcation, civic consciousness, and leadership acculturation ensures that students evolve into ethically anchored, socially responsive, and globally literate citizens. Student safety and well-being remain inviolable priorities. The campus is fortified with a comprehensive and vigilant security matrix, encompassing extensive CCTV surveillance, trained security personnel and a meticulously orchestrated student pick-

up and drop-off protocol—ensuring an environment that is secure, safeguarded and closely supervised.

Health and nutrition are addressed with equal circumspection through a thoughtfully structured school meal programme. The cafeteria provisions balanced breakfasts, nourishing lunches and wholesome evening refreshments, conscientiously curated to accommodate the diverse nutritional exigencies of the student community.

Aura Global Schools has also etched a distinctive imprint in the sporting arena, registering commendable achievements in badminton, fencing, football, skating, archery, boxing and athletics. Artistic excellence is cultivated through arts fest platforms, performing arts conclaves, and cultural exchange initiatives, reinforcing the institution's unwavering commitment to all-round edification.

Iran consulate celebrates Islamic...

(Cont. from page - 1)

of trade and cultural institutions, members of the media, figures from the film and creative industries, Indian friends of Iran as well as members of the Iranian community residing in India.

The warm and convivial atmosphere reflected the spirit of friendship, mutual respect and shared cultural appreciation that charac-

terises Iran–India relations. The reception provided an opportunity for dialogue, networking and the strengthening of existing ties, while also paving the way for new avenues of co-operation. Many guests expressed keen interest in Iran's rich cultural heritage, artistic vitality and tourism potential, and were encouraged to explore Iran as a destination distinguished by its history, hospitality and civilisational depth.

In their addresses, HE Motlagh, Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Mumbai and Dr. Gawande, Chief Protocol Officer, highlighted the current cordial relations between

Iran and India, underscoring the long-standing historical, cultural and civilisational links between the two nations.

They also took note of the growing cultural, artistic and people-to-people exchanges, emphasising their role in deepening mutual understanding and fostering sustainable co-operation. The speakers further stressed the importance of cultural diplomacy as a bridge between societies, noting that exchanges in the fields of art, cinema, literature and heritage have significantly contributed to bringing the peoples of Iran and India closer together.

The Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Mumbai has extended its sincere appreciation to all distinguished guests and participants for their presence and engagement and reaffirmed its commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations and promoting cultural, economic and social co-operation between the two friendly nations.



Dr Gawande, Chief Protocol Officer addressing the dignitaries.



L&T bags Dubai road project

MUMBAI: Engineering and construction giant Larsen and Toubro has secured a "significant" transport infrastructure development project in Dubai. The order pertains to the Phase-1 of the road development initiative undertaken by the UAE authorities, L&T informed the exchanges.

L&T did not provide any financial details of the order. According to company classification, a significant order ranges between Rs 1,000 crore to Rs 2,500 crore. The contract has been secured by the Trans-

portation Infrastructure business vertical of the company for the improvement of Latifa Bint Hamdan Street in Dubai.

The project is scheduled to be completed in 36 months. The scope of the project includes upgrading the existing road corridor stretching from Emirates Road (E611) to Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Road (E311). The work involves widening the current two-lane dual carriageway into a four-lane dual carriageway in each direction to enhance network capacity and ease traffic flow.