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PASSPORT TO GLOBAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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Fadnavis opposes flight shift to Navi Mumbai

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has opposed a plan to shift flights serving 14 international destinations from Mumbai airport to Navi Mumbai from next summer. He has urged a phased redevelopment of Terminal-1, proposing that a replacement section be built before the existing terminal is demolished. The move follows concerns from airlines over reduced



capacity during construction.

He has also written to the Union civil aviation minister raising concerns over the proposed shift of flights. "I have written to them to first develop Terminal 1B, shift 1A to 1B and then take down the existing 1A terminal," Fadnavis said. The Airports Authority of India (AAI), a central government entity, holds a 26pc in Mumbai airport, while the remaining 74pc owned by Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL). The redevelopment of T1 has raised concerns over how flight operations and passenger traffic will be managed during the construction period.

Fadnavis has suggested that T1 be demolished and reconstructed in phases instead of being shut down entirely before work on its replacement begins. According to reports last month, Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) informed airlines of its plan to

(Cont. on page - 2)

India, Saudi sign Haj 2027 agreement, quota retained at 1,75,025 pilgrims



India and Saudi Arabia signed the bilateral Haj Agreement for 2027 in Jeddah. It was signed by Union Minister for Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju and Saudi Arabia's Minister of Haj and Umrah Dr Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah in the presence of officials.

JEDDAH: India and Saudi Arabia have signed the bilateral Haj Agreement for 2027, retaining India's annual pilgrimage quota at 1,75,025 pilgrims.

The agreement was signed in Jeddah by Union Minister for Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju and Saudi Arabia's Minister of Haj and Umrah Dr Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah, following bilateral discussions on preparations for the forthcoming pilgrimage.

The two ministers reviewed the arrangements for Haj 2027 and discussed measures to strengthen co-ordination, logistical support and pilgrim welfare. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring a safe, smooth and comfortable pilgrimage for Indian Haj pilgrims.

The Indian delegation included the Joint Secre-

(Cont. on page - 2)



IndiGo extends suspension of Jeddah flights till Nov 21

NEW DELHI: IndiGo has announced a further extension of the suspension of flights to and from Jeddah and Madinah until Nov 21. Operations to Riyadh and Dammam will remain suspended until Nov 30.

An official release said the decision was taken in view of the prevailing security and safety consid-

erations. Due to renewed missile and drone attacks by Houthis on Saudi, airlines across India have announced an extension in the suspension of their operations to multiple cities in the country.

T"The safety and security of customers and crew remain our highest prior-

(Cont. on page - 2)

Flights to 14 global destinations to be shifted to Navi Mumbai

MUMBAI: All flight operations from Muscat to Mumbai are likely to be moved to the new airport by the end of the first quarter of 2027. It was reported that 12 airlines, operating around 16 daily departures to 14 destinations, have not been allocated slots at the existing airport for the upcoming summer schedule.

In a notification to the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), the management of Mumbai International Airport (MIAL) stated that it plans to temporarily shift all flights serving these 14 international destinations to the Navi Mumbai International Airport. MIAL explained that transferring flight operations is essential for the redevelopment and expansion of Terminal 1, a project set to continue until 2029.

"This will ensure that all flights from the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) to these international destinations operate out of a single airport rather than being split across two facilities in the same region.

This approach will ensure seamless onward connections, minimise passenger inconvenience and provide an integrated travel experience," the notification stated.

The 14 affected destinations are Bahrain, Dammam, Dhaka, Doha, Fujairah, Jakarta, Jeddah, Kathmandu, Kuwait City, Madinah, Muscat, Ras Al Khaimah, Riyadh and Sharjah. As earlier reported, two of India's largest

(Cont. on page - 2)



Evasive pay panel

Pay commissions have become more of an election lollypop. Liberal pay panel terms are announced on the eve of elections to hoodwink the staff and then they are either delayed in implementation or forgotten. For example, the Eighth Central Pay Commission (EPC) is a year old. The resolution formally constituting the EPC was notified on Nov 3, 2025.

Nevertheless, the EPC itself seems to be in no hurry. It is still in the stage of consultations as can be seen from its programmes on its official website. In any case, it has six more months to complete the official 18 months given to study and report. The Eighth Central Pay Commission is headed by Chairperson Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai with Prof Pulak Ghosh as a part-time member and Pankaj Jain as its member.



According to published reports, the expected fitment factor, the most important indicator of the base magnitude of the award, varies widely between 1.9 and 4.8. The conservative analysts, based on previous pay commission awards (particularly the sixth and the seventh), expect the fitment factor (a numerical multiplier used by a pay commission to convert an employee's pre-revised basic pay or a retiree's pension into a new, revised basic pay structure in a single uniform step) to be in the range of 1.9 to 2.7. Many official representations, however, are more optimistic and expect the factor to be between 3.5 and 4.8.

Employees also expect many other monetary changes (doubling of annual increment from three to six per cent, allowance optimisation etc). Some unions and pension-er bodies have made radical proposals like merging the employee pay levels to bring it down from the current 18 to seven to enable better standardisation of pay scales.

In short, the expectations, demands and explanations are many. However, the history of seven pay commission awards and their final implementation make serious observers cautiously optimistic. They have only limited expectations. A regulatory board reportedly sought a 450pc increase in total emoluments from the seventh CPC, but got just about 15pc. This could be an outlier, since the total number of full-time members in all the regulatory bodies together comes to only a few hundred (mainly retired officials) and therefore it is not an influential group.

Actually, money is not a problem as the Union government flush with funds. The fiscal position is positive and dynamic. The economy is growing very fast. Tax collection is at a record level and disinvestment is going well. The accumulated DA component in the last 10 years is only 60 plus pc because of generally low inflation.

The usual practice was to merge dearness allowance (DA) with basic pay and add a "bonus" in order to balance the rising standards of living. That bonus is the real immediate addition to the pay, which has been 20 to 30pc except in case of the Sixth Pay Panel that provided about 45pc overall increase. By such reckoning, a simple estimate would give a fitment factor of 1.9 to 2.0 based on the assumption that the two instalments (due from July 1, 2026 and from Jan 1, 2027) of DA of about three per cent each will get merged.

All said and done, one hopes the EPC would come out with attractive recommendations within the stipulated time- frame.

LIPSYNCH

"Believe you can and you're halfway there."

— Theodore Roosevelt

Students warned against fake medical colleges

NEW DELHI: The National Medical Commission has cautioned students and parents against taking admission or making payments to medical colleges without verifying their authenticity and regulatory approval, amid instances of institutions offering medical courses without statutory permission.

The advisory comes in compliance with directions of the Supreme Court in an ongoing case -- Ayesha Jain v Amity University, Noida and Others -- in which the court directed regulatory bodies, including the commission, to caution students and parents against dealing with educational institutions without first verifying their authenticity.

The direction was issued

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India, Saudi sign Haj 2027...

(Cont. from page - 1)

tary (Haj) of the Ministry of Minority Affairs and the CEO of the Haj Committee of India. India's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia also participated in the discussions.

During his visit to Saudi Arabia, Rijiju attended the inaugural ceremony of the Sixth Haj Conference and Exhibition in Jeddah and participated in a ministerial conference chaired by Dr Al-Rabiah. The Indian minister appreciated the Saudi leadership's continued efforts towards ensuring the welfare and safety of pilgrims and assured India's full co-operation for the successful conduct of Haj 2027.

He also chaired a review meeting with officials of the Consulate General of India, the Ministry of Minority Affairs and the Haj Committee of India to assess preparations for the next pilgrimage season.

The agreement further reinforces the longstanding India-Saudi Arabia partnership, particularly in Haj management, logistical co-ordination and people-to-people relations.

IndiGo extends suspension...

(Cont. from page - 1)

ity. We continue to closely monitor the situation and will share further updates as necessary," IndiGo said.

The other major operators in the region, Air India and Air India Express, are expected to follow suit. The Air India Group had earlier announced that its flights to and from Jeddah, Riyadh and Dammam would remain suspended until Nov 14.

In a recent statement, Akasa Air had said its operations to Jeddah had been suspended until Nov 18 and those to Riyadh until Nov 30. "In view of the prevailing security situation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and following a careful assessment of the safety environment, Akasa Air has extended the suspension of flights to and from the following destinations," it said.

Flights to 14 global destinations to be...

(Cont. from page - 1)

airlines, IndiGo and Air India, have announced plans to shift international services to NMIA, which includes all their existing routes to Muscat, starting in early 2027.

IndiGo will transfer 12 daily international departures from the current Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) to NMIA starting in Feb, affecting all present operations to Bahrain, Riyadh, Dammam, Jeddah, Madinah, Kuwait, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Muscat, Dhaka and Jakarta. Air India Group will also commence a phased transition of select domestic and West Asia services to NMIA.

With several transit and connectivity projects linking different parts of the city to the NMIA still in the development stages, the move may cause inconvenience for travellers—especially those from Mumbai's western and northern suburbs—who will have to spend significantly more on transportation (taxis and public transit) and spend several more hours on the road. It will also be tedious for passengers travelling from Muscat to NMIA who need to catch a connecting flight from Mumbai Airport (BOM), located nearly 50 km away.

"It will be an expensive proposition, with fuel prices in India currently very high, as travel costs could increase by over 50pc. Travel time from many areas will also double, increasing from the current 1–1.5 hours to nearly three hours," said some regular travellers.

Fadnavis opposes flight...

(Cont. from page - 1)

reduce international operations at Terminal 2 (T2) by one-third from the Summer 2027 schedule, beginning in March-end. The move is intended to accommodate five million passengers per annum (mppa) of domestic traffic that would be displaced during the first phase of T1's demolition.

Furthermore, last week, AAHL informed the ministry about its plan to shift flights connecting Mumbai with 14 international destinations to Navi Mumbai from next summer. MIAL has informed airlines that it cannot accommodate their requested slots for the Summer 2027 schedule and that a temporary shift of operations from T2 will be necessary.

MIAL originally planned to implement the partial shift of international operations by Oct 25 but later deferred the deadline to March 2027 following concerns raised by several foreign airlines regarding the transition timeline.

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Currency	Bill Buy	Bill Sell
US Dollar	93.21	94.44
British Pound	124.4	126.16
Euro	103.75	105.97
Japanese Yen	58.69	59.62
Swiss Franc (CHF)	112.34	114.81
Canadian Dollar	65.35	66.82
Australian Dollar	63.91	65.3
Norwegian Krone	9.69	9.99
Swedish Krona	9.34	9.61
New Zealand Dollar	52	53.16
Hong Kong Dollar	11.73	12.09
Kuwaiti Dinar	310.2158	298.0096
Singapore Dollar	72.41	74.08
Saudi Arabian Riyal	24.51	25.29
U A E Dirham	25.11	25.83



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UAE hiring up 16pc as jobs paying up to Dh10,000 lead the recovery

DUBAI: Hiring in the UAE has risen 16pc since April, with jobs paying up to Dh10,000 a month, the largest share of recruitment, growing fastest at 24pc , according to the second edition of the Naukrigulf Hiring Index.

The Index climbed from 1,007 in April to 1,167 in September. It tracks more than two lakh hiring mandates a year from over 7,000 employers in the UAE, Qatar and Oman.

Sharad Sindhwani, EVP, business and product head at Naukrigulf, said hiring in the Gulf is "clearly picking up", led by engineering, manufacturing, healthcare and real estate. "Hiring is still lower than last year, though the gap is closing fast," he said.

Hiring growth was strongest at the lower end of the salary scale. Jobs paying up to Dh10,000 a month rose 24pc since April. Roles paying Dh10,000 - 20,000 rose seven per cent, and those paying Dh20,000-30,000 rose 10pc . Hiring for jobs paying more than Dh30,000 is lower than in April.



The Naukrigulf Hiring Index measures employer hiring intent through two signals. Outbound hiring covers new job postings and applicant review activity, while inbound hiring covers employer searches of the candidate database.

The regional conflict, which started on Feb28, had created uncertainty across the Gulf job markets, with businesses reassessing hiring plans, investment decisions and operational costs. Sectors such as tourism, hospitality, aviation, logistics and retail are particularly exposed to disruptions in travel, trade and consumer confidence.

However, the UAE's diversified economy, strong infrastructure and continued investment in technology, finance and other non-oil sectors could help cushion the impact.Recent recruitment trends suggest the impact has been uneven rather than a region-wide employment downturn. UAE hiring rebounded by four in the third quarter of 2026, while GCC hiring increased by two per cent, according to Cooper Fitch data. However, employers remain selective, prioritising critical skills and specialist positions over broad workforce expansion.

Between April and Sept, hiring increased in 14 of the 15 major industries. Manufacturing and industrial recorded the highest growth among the larger sectors at 32pc bringing hiring to just two per cent below last year's level.

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GULF FAQs

Can an employer refuse maternity leave?

Could you explain the UAE's official maternity leave policy and the rights available to working mothers? If an employer fails to comply with these provisions, what is the formal complaint process and what penalties may the employer face?

Pursuant to your queries, it is assumed that your employer is located in the mainland of Dubai. Therefore, the provisions of the UAE employment law are applicable. A female employee is entitled to a total maternity leave period of 60 days, comprising 45 days with full pay and 15 days with half pay. This is in accordance with the provisions of Article 30 of the Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 on the Regulation of Employment Relations (the 'Employment Law').

"The female worker shall be entitled to a maternity leave of 60 days, according to the following: The first 45 days with full wage; and the following 15 days with half wage."

An employer shall grant a female worker maternity leave upon her request at any time, starting from the last day of the month preceding immediately the month, in which she is expected to give birth, this is in accordance with the Article 30 (5) of the Employment Law, which states:

"The employer shall grant the female worker a maternity leave upon her request at any time, starting from the last day of the month preceding immediately the month, in which she is expected to give birth and this shall be proven by a certificate issued by the medical entity."Based on the aforementioned provisions of the law, female employees are entitled to 60 days of maternity leave, consisting of 45 days of fully paid leave and 15 days of half-paid leave, along with additional unpaid leave in cases of pregnancy or childbirth-related medical conditions.

You may consider filing an employment complaint with the Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratisation (Mohre) if an employer fails to comply with these provisions. Based on your complaint with the Mohre, the ministry may attempt to amicably settle the dispute.

In the event that there is no amicable settlement with your employer before Mohre, then you may file an employment case against your employer in the court which has jurisdiction in the emirate of Dubai. The competent court will determine the merits of the claim, including whether the employer has unlawfully denied the employee her statutory maternity leave entitlements and any remedies or compensation to which the employee may be entitled.

Can I sell a mortgaged property in Dubai?

I own a home in Dubai with an outstanding mortgage. I have recently lost my job and plan to return to my home country. Can I sell the property and have the buyer take over the remaining mortgage? Would I need the bank's approval, and what is the legal process for transferring the property and settling or transferring the outstanding loan?

Pursuant to your query, as the property is situated in Dubai, the provision of the Dubai mortgage law is applicable.

A mortgagor may sell, donate or otherwise dispose of the mortgaged property, or create any real or personal right over it, only with the approval of the mortgagee and provided that the purchaser agrees to assume all obligations of the mortgagor under the mortgage contract. A mortgagee may also specify that the mortgagor and the purchaser shall be jointly liable for such obligations. This is in accordance with the Article 10 of the Dubai Law No. 14 of 2008 Concerning Mortgage in the Emirate of Dubai.

"A Mortgagor may sell, donate or dispose, in any other manner, of the mortgaged real property unit or real property or create any real right or personal right on the same only with the approval of the mortgagee and provided that the person to whom the real property is disposed of agrees that all obligations of the mortgagor under the mortgage contract will be transferred to him. A Mortgagee may stipulate in the mortgage contract that the mortgagor and person to whom the real property is disposed of will be jointly liable for such obligations."

You may consider the following options:

Option 1: Sale of the property and settlement of the existing mortgage:

You may sell the property and the sale proceeds shall settle the outstanding mortgage. The practical steps are generally as follows:

1. Obtain a liability letter from the bank: request a letter confirming the outstanding loan amount and the amount required to settle the mortgage, together with any applicable early settlement charges or other fees.

2. Agree on the sale terms: Enter into a sale agreement with the purchaser, taking into account the outstanding mortgage and arrange to settle the mortgage amount.

3. Register the transaction with Dubai Land Department ("DLD"): DLD provides a specific service titled "Registering the Sale of a Mortgaged Property". Under this service, a seller and a purchaser attend at an office of a Real Estate Registration Trustee Centre with the required documents. The transaction is initially registered to safeguard the parties' respective interests while the mortgage is being settled.

4. Settle the outstanding loan: The DLD's procedure provides for manager's cheques, including a cheque in favour of the bank for the outstanding debt and a cheque in favour of the seller for any remaining sale proceeds, where applicable. The bank's mortgage release letter is then obtained.

5. Complete the transfer of ownership: Upon submission of the mortgage release letter, DLD completes the applicable mortgage release and property sale registration procedures. If the purchaser is obtaining a new mortgage, the relevant financing and mortgage registration procedures must also be completed.

This procedure is particularly relevant where the purchaser is paying from his own resources or obtaining separate financing and the seller's existing loan is to be discharged from the sale proceeds. The precise documentation and payment arrangements should be confirmed with the bank and the Real Estate Trustee Centre before completion.

Option 2: Transfer of the existing mortgage obligations to the purchaser.

Alternatively, you may request the bank's approval for the purchaser to assume the existing mortgage obligations, if the purchaser is willing.

In this case, you should approach the bank with the proposed transaction and request confirmation of whether it will permit the purchaser to assume the existing loan. The bank may assess the purchaser's financial circumstances and require revised or replacement financing documentation. Any transfer of the property and the associated mortgage obligations must be documented and registered in accordance with the bank's approval and applicable DLD requirements.

Based on the aforementioned provisions and procedures, you may consider selling the property before returning to your home country. The most suitable route will depend on whether the bank permits the purchaser to assume the existing mortgage or requires the loan to be settled from the sale proceeds. You should obtain the bank's written confirmation of the proposed arrangement and co-ordinate with DLD or a Real Estate Registration Trustee Centre to complete the transaction.

For further clarification, you may contact your mortgage lender and the DLD.

APPLICABLE PROVISION: Dubai Law No. 14 of 2008 Concerning Mortgage in the Emirate of Dubai.

Lulu not to withdraw defamation cases against online publication



NEW DELHI: Lulu Group says it will not withdraw defamation cases against certain people despite public apology.

The legal action follows a defamation suit filed by Yusuff Ali seeking Rs100 million in damages for loss of reputation. The Delhi High Court had earlier directed the editor of an online Malayalam news portal to remove defamatory content published against the LuLu chairman, and restrained the individual from making further comments about Yusuff Ali on any platform. A separate defamation case was also filed before the Ernakulam Sub Court in Kerala.

The group has initiated legal proceedings in courts across Kerala, Lucknow and Delhi. Lulu Group has said it will not withdraw any of the defamation cases it has filed against individuals accused of spreading false allegations against the company and its chairman MA Yusuff Ali, even if those accused have issued public apologies.

V. Nandakumar, Director of Global Marketing & Communications at Lulu Group, said the group has complete faith in the Indian judicial system and will pursue every legal remedy available. "This is not about silencing criticism. It is about protecting the truth," Nandakumar said.

The accused individual had publicly apologised in late October, saying his remarks were incorrect and that he was withdrawing them. The allegations were linked to a gold smuggling case and were published in a video in November 2020.

Nandakumar said Lulu is not just a business but a home for more than 75,000 employees."We have built this organisation over decades on trust, integrity and hard work, and we hold these values very close to our hearts," he said. "We will always welcome fair criticism and differing opinions. But deliberate falsehoods and malicious attacks on our reputation will never go unchallenged."

The group reiterated that it fully respects freedom of speech and everyone's right to express opinions, question decisions or criticise activities. However, it drew a clear distinction between legitimate criticism and deliberately spreading fake news, false allegations and misinformation with malicious intentions.

Is India new back office for global airlines?

SYDNEY: Is India the new back office for global airlines? Qantas moves 850 roles' work to Accenture teams in India

Qantas said that it will cut about 850 corporate jobs in Australia. Much of the work will move to the



consulting firm Accenture. Most of it will be done by Accenture teams in India. Some will stay in Australia.

CEO Vanessa Hudson broke the news in an email to all staff. She called it difficult news for some people. She also said the decision is not a judgment on anyone's effort or commitment.

The cuts hit head office, not the front line. Pilots, cabin crew and airport staff are not part of this plan. The first changes will land in four teams: finance, procurement, people and marketing. Qantas expects that first wave by the middle of 2027. The rest will follow over the coming years.

The 850 roles are about three percent of the airline's roughly 28,000 Australian employees. Qantas has not said how many jobs go in each team or each year.

The Accenture partnership will run for seven years. Qantas says it wants to modernise its back-end systems, processes and data. The airline says the outsourced work will later be reshaped further with automation and AI.

Taj, Ambuja Neotia unveil two hotels

KOLKATA: Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), which owns and runs Taj group of hotels and Ambuja Neotia have unveiled AltAir House – IHCL SeleQtions in Kolkata and Siliguri, marking an expansion of their partnership in West Bengal.

Puneet Chhatwal, MD & CEO, IHCL, said: "Our longstanding partnership with Ambuja Neotia strengthens with the opening of AltAir House under the IHCL SeleQtions brand in Kolkata and Siliguri. AltAir House, with its bespoke design and experiences, is an ideal fit for the IHCL SeleQtions platform.

Students warned against...

(Cont. from page - 2)

in the context of a reported instance of a purported fake medical college operating from a farmhouse and claiming to offer various courses.

The commission said students and parents should "exercise due diligence and verify the authenticity and regulatory status of any institution" before seeking admission, enrolling in or making any payment towards a medical course. It advised students seeking admission to MBBS courses to verify whether the college is included in the official list of medical colleges published by the commission and whether the requisite permission has been granted for the relevant academic year.

The commission cautioned that the presence of a college in an official list or its operation in an earlier year "shall not, by itself, be treated as confirmation of permission to admit students for every subsequent academic year or beyond the approved intake"

Oman Air–GMF AeroAsia partnership launches aircraft MRO facility

MUSCAT: Muscat has taken a significant step towards strengthening Oman's aviation industry with the launch of Oman GMF Technic, the country's first dedicated aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) venture.



The joint venture has been established by Oman's national carrier, Oman Air, in partnership with Indonesia-based GMF AeroAsia, bringing together the two companies' aviation expertise to develop aircraft maintenance capabilities in the Sultanate.

The facility is expected to serve not only Oman Air but also international airlines, positioning Muscat as a potential regional hub for aircraft maintenance services.

The facility will offer both base maintenance and line maintenance services. While line maintenance covers routine inspections and minor repairs between flights, base maintenance involves more extensive checks and repair work requiring specialised facilities. A major focus of the partnership will be knowledge transfer and technical training for Omani nationals. By drawing on GMF AeroAsia's experience, the venture aims to develop specialised engineering skills and create new career opportunities for local aviation professionals.

The project follows a 20-year concession agreement signed between GMF AeroAsia and Oman's Civil Aviation Authority on Oct 5, 2026, for operating and managing aircraft maintenance facilities at Muscat International Airport.

The initiative also supports Oman's National Aviation Strategy 2040 and Vision 2040, which seek to diversify the economy, strengthen aviation infrastructure and establish the country as a competitive regional aviation hub.

With its strategic location connecting the MidEast, Asia, Africa and Europe, Muscat is now seeking to attract a larger share of the growing international aircraft maintenance market.

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