



## Message on Independence Day 2025

# 'World is one family' that is our foreign policy

On the special occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin residing in Kuwait. I also take this opportunity to convey my profound gratitude to the leadership, government and people of Kuwait for their steadfast support for close and friendly ties between our two countries. India remains committed to further strengthening and expanding this long-standing and time-tested relationship.

2. Today, as we celebrate 79 years since our Independence, we take pride in India's many achievements during these eight decades. Our commitment to equitable

development has been the cornerstone of our socio-economic policies. The principles of democracy, pluralism, and unity in diversity are deeply embedded in Indian society, guided by the ancient philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family), which also shapes our foreign policy.

3. India today is a land of a billion opportunities, with a robust economy that has made significant strides despite global challenges in an uncertain geopolitical environment. India has recently become the fourth largest economy in the world and is poised to become the third largest economy in the next couple of years. Our 'Atmanirbhar'



**HE Dr Adarsh Swaika**  
(Ambassador of India in Kuwait)

programme through the flagship 'Make in India' initiative is not only designed to make us self-reliant but become an integral part of global supply chains. Today we are known in the world for many things – Pharmacy of the World, leader in space technology, delivery of digital solutions

worldwide by our IT companies, thriving startup ecosystem with exponential increase in number of unicorns, innovation and technological advancements and so. The recent events have also established us as a reliable manufacturer and exporter of state-of-art defence equipment. There has never been a better time to invest in India, with unprecedented momentum in modernizing our physical and digital infrastructure. India has made significant improvements in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings, the Global Innovation Index, and is recognized as a key driver of the global economy.

4. India has been resolute in its 'Zero Toler-

ance' approach towards terrorism. The resolute stance against cross-border terrorism taken by India recently through 'Operation Sindoor' in the wake of the horrific Pahalgam terror attack shows the determination of India to fight this menace through its 'New Normal' approach.

5. On the international stage, India continues to play a vital role in promoting global peace, stability, and prosperity. India has taken leadership role on global issues of relevance and concern, including reforming multilateral institutions like the UN Security Council and issues of climate change, affordable energy access, food security

(Cont. on page - 2)

# INDIA's Human Resources," A Sleeping Giant," to Drive Global Workforce and Remittance Growth

INDIA's vast Human Resources Potential is poised to become a major Driver of Inward Remittances as the skilling and Up-Skilling Mission Championed by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi gains significant momentum together with the Centre/ State Govts initiatives towards the employability of unemployed Youths and to make them at par with International standards. The recent coordinated

push, the MEA-Overseas Employment Div, in joining hands with the Indian Missions and their Accredited Overseas Recruitment Agencies to ensure Safe, Legal and secure mobility for India's Emigrants youth seeking Employment Opportunities abroad. Working in coordination with Indian Missions abroad, the initiative aims to open new sectors for Safe, Legal and ethical Overseas Place-



**Mr VS ABDULKAREEM,**  
President-IPEPCIL

ments by taking the Accredited Recruitment Agencies into confidence, thus eliminating the unscrupulous channels.

Stakeholders emphasized that the RAs fraternity must be engaged as a trusted partners to foster Ethical Recruitment and expand access to Global placements. Such strategies promises greater market access with the raising International demand for skilled manpower, so the integrated Approach promises to transform its " Sleeping Giant " of Human Capital into a Global workforce



Leader, boosting Employment, ensuring Migrant welfare and strengthening the Nation's Economy through sustained Remittance inflows and multiple other benefits as well, said Mr ABDULKAREEM - President-IPEPCIL

# Happy Independence Day



## 15TH AUGUST 2025



## Welcome Tax Bill-2025

Amidst the political din in the capital, not much attention has been given to the new Income Tax Bill-2025 passed by both houses of parliament by politicians, particularly the MPs. Once it gets the presidential approval, the bill will become an Act.

This legislation will formally replace the 63-year-old tax code with a modernised legal framework designed to align with evolving economic realities seeking to balance investor confidence, taxpayer relief and administrative efficiency with the new law.

IT provisions all these years had been very harsh and there are many anecdotes and jokes about them. There is a saying that "Like income tax, death is certain" highlighting the severity of the law. In England there is a story of a great author receiving a letter from the government with the marking "In Her Majesty's Service" in a yellow cover.

*Editorial*  
By EL Vaidyanathan  
Fearing that this could be an IT notice (IT notices used to come in yellow envelope), the recipient did not open the envelope only to realise later from newspapers that it was a literary award from the queen with an invitation to visit the Buckingham Palace.

Back home, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the revised bill in the house, following the government's decision to withdraw the earlier draft note of Feb 13, 2025. The select committee headed by BJP MP from Odisha Baijayant Panda has done a wonderful job aimed at simplifying the law. The revised draft incorporates a majority of the 285 recommendations made by the Select Committee.

What's most welcome in the IT bill is the scrapping of different tax years (assessment year, financial year and calendar year) and making it one single year --- the Tax Year. The key features of the Income Tax Bill, 2025 include the following: Deductions under Section 80M of the 1961 Act (Clause 148 of the IT Bill, 2025) are also available to companies that have opted for the new regime, deductions for commuted pension and gratuity for family members are provided under Clause 93 of the 2025 bill, provisions of MAT (Minimum Alternate Tax) and AMT (Alternate Minimum Tax) are separated as two sub-sections under Section 206 while the provisions of AMT apply only to those non-corporate that have claimed deductions. LLPs that have only capital gains income are not liable for AMT if there is no claim for deduction. The term "profession" has been added after "business" in clause 187 to enable professionals, with total receipts exceeding Rs 50 crore in a year, to have the facility of prescribed electronic modes of payment. Flexibility has been provided for allowing refund claims in cases where the return is not filed in due time, with the removal of Clause 263(1)(ix).

With this tax administration has been made more efficient, transparent and taxpayer-friendly with reforms like the Annual Information System, which also uses verified third-party data to pre-fill returns, the central processing of returns – reducing average processing time by 1/10th (to nearly 10 days) and enabling faster refunds and faceless assessments and faceless appeals ensuring impartiality and efficiency by eliminating physical interface and geographical barriers. So far, so good.

### LIPSYNCH

"The hardest thing to understand in the world is income tax."  
----- Albert Einstein

## INDIAN TOURISM: INVINCIBLE SPIRIT FAITH CONCLAVE 2025

redible India

12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2025  
TAJ PALACE, NEW DELHI



The Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH), the umbrella organisation representing the entire travel, tourism and hospitality sectors recently opened its two-day National Tourism Conclave in Delhi to explore opportunities and address challenges for the sector. Themed "Indian Tourism Invincible Spirit", the conclave sought to unite leaders from the country's 10 major national tourism and hospitality associations along with senior government officers, industry pioneers etc to chart road map for Tourism Vision 2047, an ambitious plan to grow tourism into a \$3 trillion economic power house.

## India's maritime vision: from SAGAR to Indo-Pacific to MAHASAGAR

By Suchitra  
Durai  
(Former  
Ambassador  
of India to  
Thailand)



A decade ago, on March 2, 2015, while commissioning in Mauritius the gleaming Offshore Patrol Vessel Barracuda, built in Garden Reach, Kolkata to Mauritian specifications, Prime Minister Modi outlined India's policy towards the Indian Ocean Region (IOR): SAGAR – Security

and Growth for All in the Region. The Indian Ocean, he pointed out, was critical to the future of the world bearing two-thirds of the world's oil shipments, one third of its bulk cargo and half of its container traffic. The 40 states that are on its littoral host nearly 40pc of the world's population.

SAGAR policy emphasised five aspects: safety and security of the Indian mainland and island territories and ensuring a safe, secure and stable IOR;

deepen economic and security co-operation with friends in the IOR particularly maritime neighbours and island states through capacity building; collective action and co-operation; seek a more integrated and co-operative future towards sustainable development for all; and increased maritime engagement in the IOR as the primary responsibility for the stability and prosperity of IOR lay with  
(Cont. on page - 8)

## Message on Independence Day...

(Cont. from page - 1)  
etc.

6. An epochal event in our bilateral relations with Kuwait was the long-awaited visit of Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi to Kuwait in December, 2024. The visit was historic in many respects – conferment of Kuwait's highest honour of the 'Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer' on Hon'ble Prime Minister by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and upgradation of our relationship to that of 'Strategic Partnership'. The back-to-back visits of Foreign Ministers of both countries prepared the agenda and successful

outcomes of the high-level visit. Bilateral relations with Kuwait have become more broad-based in the last year with setting up of 7 new institutional mechanisms in areas of mutual interest. Bilateral trade and investments are growing and are expected to grow at a much greater pace. Our cultural connections resonate well with our Kuwaiti friends, and people-to-people contacts form the foundation of our bilateral relations. The Indian community continues to be the largest and the community of first preference in Kuwait.

7. The Indian Embassy considers the welfare and well-being of the Indian

community in Kuwait, as over-riding priority, serving as a 'Home Away from Home'. I take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to Indian community associations, professional bodies, cultural groups, media representatives and all those who are making efforts to strengthen our bilateral relations with Kuwait in their own way and support the community members in distress.

8. On this proud and joyous occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, I wish every Indian in Kuwait and all friends of India in Kuwait, success, good health and happiness.

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FOREX RATES

As on 14th August 2025 (In rupees)

Currency	BillBuy	BillSell
US Dollar	86.9	88.06
British Pound	117.97	119.64
Euro	101.38	103.57
Japanese Yen	59.26	60.23
Swiss Franc (CHF)	107.4	109.82
Canadian Dollar	62.88	64.3
Australian Dollar	56.74	58.03
Norwegian Krone	8.43	8.68
Swedish Krona	9.01	9.27
New Zealand Dollar	51.69	52.83
Hong Kong Dollar	10.93	11.27
Kuwaiti Dinar	292.5359	281.473
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Saudi Arabian Riyal	22.86	23.59
United Arab Emirates	23.41	24.09

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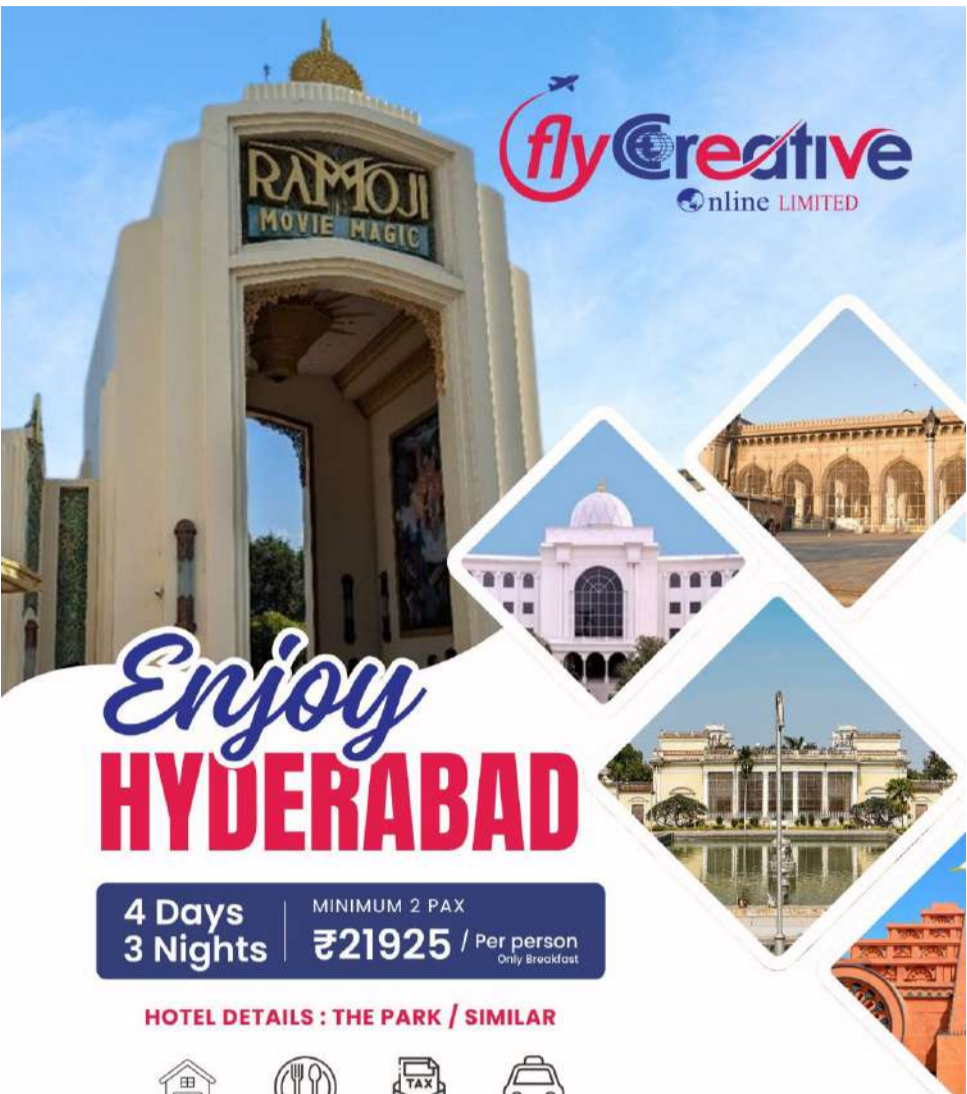
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### Day 2 Agatti – Water Sports & Sightseeing

Enjoy water activities followed by island sightseeing – visit the jetty, desalination plant, Lagoon Beach, and Archaeological Museum.



### Day 3 Kalpitti Island Excursion

Morning boat trip to Kalpitti Island and return. Overnight at Agatti.



### Day 4 Agatti to Bangaram

After breakfast, transfer to Bangaram by speedboat (1 hour). Welcome drink and check-in at resort.



### Day 5 Bangaram – Water Sports & Optional Island Tour

Indulge in water sports. Optional day trip to Thinnakara & Parali Islands (INR 1200 extra per person).



### Day 6 Departure

Transfer to Agatti by boat (45 mins) and board flight to Cochin.

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# GULF FAQs

## How to change visit visa to residency permit after receiving job offer?

**I am currently in the UAE on a visit visa and actively looking for employment in the country. A company has extended a job offer, which I am happy to accept. What are the next steps? Can I start working on a visit visa immediately after receiving the offer, or must I wait until my work visa is issued? Could you please explain how this process works and what legal requirements I need to fulfil before beginning employment?**

An employer in the UAE cannot employ an individual without obtaining a valid work permit. This is under Article 6(1) of the Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021 on the Regulation of Employment Relations, which states: "No work may be performed in the UAE and no employee may be recruited or employed by any employer without obtaining the work permit from the Ministry (of Human Resources and Emiratization), by the provisions of this Decree-Law and its Executive Regulations."



Furthermore, an expatriate should not engage in any employment without a valid work permit and UAE residency visa. This is in accordance with Article 5(4) of the Federal Decree Law No. 29 of 2021 Regarding Entry and Residence of Foreigners, which states: "An alien is obligated not to engage in any activity or work except by the legislation in force in the State."

Based on the type of work, an employer and an employee may mutually agree to obtain a work permit as stipulated by the Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratization (MoHRE). The type of work permit may include, but is not limited to, full-time work permit, part-time work permit, temporary work permit, freelance work permit as mentioned in Article-6 of the Cabinet Reso-

lution No. 1 of 2022 on the Implementation of Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021 Regarding the Regulation of Employment Relations.

In the event that an employer employs an individual without a valid work per-

mit and UAE residency visa, it may be penalised with a fine of up to Dh1 lakh. This is under Article-1 of the Federal Decree Law No. 9 of 2024, revising some provisions of Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021 Concerning Employment Relations, which states related to the amendment of Article 60(1) (a) of the Employment Law. The said law reads as follows: "Individuals who commit the following violations shall be fined a minimum of Dh1 lakh dirhams and a

maximum of Dh1 million: Employment of an employee without obtaining a work permit."

Based on the aforementioned provisions of law, you should not work while you are on a visit visa in the UAE. Instead, you may request your prospective employer to obtain a work permit and UAE residency visa. Your prospective employer should apply for a work permit with MoHRE and an entry permit related to UAE residency.

## UAE approves new rules for lawyers, legal consultants defining licensing, training law

**What are the highlights of the new rules for lawyers, legal consultants in UAE?**

The UAE cabinet has approved laws governing and organising the legal profession and consultancy. The regulation addresses some provision to structure and modernise the legal industry.

It introduced organised frameworks for the legal consultancy profession, which has not been regulat-

ed before.

The new law also included a format for licensing foreign law firms and legal consultancy offices, allowing for greater global engagement while ensuring compliance with local standards. It also updated the conditions and procedures for licensing lawyers. Other key amendments included updates to the rights and duties of lawyers, which aim to strengthen the relationship between legal professionals and their clients. These provisions are designed to promote transparency, ethical practices, and professional accountability within the legal industry.

The regulations now cover the registration process for legal researchers, advisors and representatives working in law firms, ensuring that all individuals involved in legal services are properly recognised and licensed.

The cabinet also introduced amendments to the conditions for renewing registration in the lawyer's register. Lawyers must complete relevant training courses or participate in scientific seminars and conferences. This will ensure lawyers stay

updated on legal developments and continuously improve their skills.

The new rules simplify the conditions and procedures for registering trainee lawyers, while organising training programmes that will equip them for the legal profession.

Key provisions of the regulations: The first-ever specialised regulation for law firms and legal consultancy companies in the country. The regulation allows law firms and legal consultancy companies to be established as either a partnership, limited liability company or sole proprietorship.

It outlines the essential details for the company's founding contract, licensing procedures and the necessary regulations for managing a professional firm.

Lawyers and legal consultants are prohibited from being partners or working in more than one company to prevent conflicts of interest.

The regulation also establishes guidelines for dealing with the suspension or death of a partner, as well as the requirement for all partners to be licensed to practice law.

## Can you evict a tenant over bounced cheques, unpaid rent?

**I rented my land to a company 20 years back for the purpose of building a hospital. Two of the company's payment cheques were returned due to insufficient funds. The company has responded that they do not wish to pay and also want to reduce the rental amount, claiming they discovered the land is full of rocks, which has delayed construction and caused them financial loss. Do I have the right to evict them from the land? And which court should I approach to file the case?**

You must file your case

before the civil court, as it holds jurisdiction over disputes arising from long-term rental contracts, which is 10 years and more. Regarding eviction, you do have the right to evict the tenant, but only after serving them with a notification at least 30 days prior to the intended eviction date.

Rent becomes due upon the tenant receiving the benefit of the property or having the ability to do so. A landlord's right to receive rent is not negated by the tenant's claim that they did not benefit from the property in a specific way – as long as the landlord delivered the prop-

erty or made it available for use. Article 19 of Law No. (26) of 2007, as amended by Law No. (33) of 2008, governing the relationship between landlords and tenants in the Emirate of Dubai, states:

"The tenant must pay the rent on its due dates..."

Article 25 of the same law states: "The landlord may request the tenant's eviction before the end of the lease term in any of the following case: A - If the tenant fails to pay the rent or any part of it within 30 days from the date of being notified to pay, unless otherwise agreed by both parties.



## SpiceJet to induct five more Boeing 737s before winter rush

**MUMBAI:** SpiceJet is expanding its fleet. The airline will lease five more Boeing 737 aircraft. This is in preparation for the Winter 2025 travel season. Most of these planes will arrive by Oct 2025. These aircraft will operate on high-demand routes. They will be used until early summer 2026. This move aims to meet the expected surge in passenger traffic. SpiceJet signed a lease agreement for five addi-

tional Boeing 737 aircraft to bolster its fleet ahead of the Winter 2025 travel season, the company said in an exchange filing. The move takes the airline's total planned new inductions to 10 aircraft.

The carrier said most of the newly leased planes will join its fleet in Oct 2025, with some arriving a few weeks earlier. The aircraft, inducted under damp lease arrangements, will serve high-demand winter

routes and remain in operation through the early summer season of 2026 before exiting in May.

Last month, SpiceJet had announced plans to induct five Boeing 737s from another operator on damp lease, signalling an aggressive fleet expansion to meet peak-season demand. The airline added that it is in "advanced discussions" to lease more aircraft ahead of the winter schedule.

## MEA's NRI welfare fund has Rs 704cr surplus

**ABU DHABI:** Indian expats in distress in the UAE and globally, who qualify for financial assistance from a welfare fund for NRIs, stand to benefit from a Dh300 million surplus in the fund.

The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) under the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) holds a substantial balance of Rs 704.56 crore (around Dh300m) as of March 31, according to information recently disclosed by the ministry in

reply to a query filed under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

The Emigration Policy and Welfare Division under the MEA revealed this information on July 14 in response to an RTI query filed by Kerala-based RTI campaigner K Govindan-Nampoothiry. "The disclosure comes at a time when financial assistance to NRIs is a pressing concern in many countries," Nampoothiry said while sharing the details exclusively with media.

The query sought details about the utilisation of ICWF funds. "The Emigration wing clarified that no budget is allocated for ICWF, and funds are raised by levying a service charge on consular, passport and visa services provided by Indian missions abroad," he said.

### What is ICWF?

Launched in 2009, the ICWF is aimed at assisting overseas Indian nationals in times of distress and emergency in the "most deserving cases" on a

"means-tested basis".

It was launched at Indian missions in 18 countries by levying a service fee for every service offered by them and expanded to 43 countries by 2011. Voluntary donation from community members is the secondary source of funding for ICWF. According to the MEA, ICWF has been a critical support in emergency evacuation of Indian nationals from conflict zones, countries affected by natural disasters, and other challenging situations.

In view of its immense utility, ICWF was extended to all Indian missions and posts abroad in 2017. An endorsement is mandatory in the passport and relevant database of ICWF beneficiaries.

### How much has been spent?:

Year-wise utilisation of the total fund under the MEA, as per the details provided by the ministry in response to the RTI application, is as follows: 2020: Rs 137.25 crore, 2021: Rs 37.07 crore, 2022: Rs 69.20 crore.

## India-China may resume direct passenger flights from next month

**NEW DELHI:** In an early sign of resetting political ties, India and China may resume direct passenger flights as early as next month (Sept). Bloomberg reported. Indian carriers have been asked to be ready to operate flights to China on short notice. According to the Bloomberg report, an official announcement on this decision is likely during the upcoming Shanghai Co-operation Organisa-

tion (SCO) summit in China.

Suspension came in place since the Covid-19 pandemic between the two most populous nations. The halting of direct services have forced travellers to take circuitous routes through hubs such as Hong Kong or Singapore. Relations between India and China hit the wall following the 2020 border clashes in Ladakh's Galwan Valley. At least 20 Indian soldiers

lost their lives after a brawl with the Chinese soldiers in June that year. The Indian government said that both sides faced casualties but an official number on the deaths of Chinese soldiers was not released by Beijing. However, there have been signs of gradual thaw, with India recently easing tourist visa restrictions for Chinese nationals. Prime Minister Modi is expected to attend the SCO summit in Tianjin from Aug 31.

## Kuwait visa on arrival for GCC expats

**KUWAIT CITY:** Kuwait now offers tourist visas on arrival to foreign residents of GCC countries with valid six-month residency, easing travel for over 30 million expatriates. This move streamlines entry, supports Kuwait's Vision 2035 economic diversification and boosts tourism projected to exceed \$1.13 billion by 2025. It aligns Kuwait with regional efforts to enhance mobility, cultural exchange, and sustainable growth. [Read More](#)

Kuwait: GCC expats, including Indians, now eligible for instant tourist visa on arrival in Kuwait

What the new policy entails?: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister, Sheikh Fahad

Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, issued the new directive through the country's official gazette Kuwait Alyoum

The announcement confirms that any foreign national residing in a Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) country, that is, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman or Kuwait itself, is now eligible to receive a tourist visa on arrival, as long as their residency permit is valid for at least six months. The visa is granted directly at the port of entry into Kuwait and does not restrict eligibility based on nationality, provided the residency criteria are met. This policy immediately repeals a 2008 regulation that previously governed how foreign residents of GCC states could enter Kuwait for tourism purposes.

The aim is to streamline entry procedures and improve regional mobility, particularly for non-GCC nationals residing in the region.

The visa-on-arrival process has been designed to be simple and efficient. Upon arrival at any Kuwaiti border point or airport, eligible travellers can approach designated immigration counters.

## Illegal Indians arrested in UK's crackdown

**LONDON:** The UK authorities have arrested hundreds of people, including Indians, in a week-long crackdown on two-wheeler riders suspected of working illegally for delivery firms across the country.

The UK Home Office revealed this week that its Immigration Enforcement teams had conducted Operation Equalise recently as part of a "nationwide intensification week of activity" targeting illegal working hotspots with a focus on the migrants working as delivery riders.

# UP expands overseas job opportunities for youth, targets Japan, Germany after Israel's success

**LUCKNOW:** After the success of 6,000 skilled workers in Israel, the Uttar Pradesh Labour Department is now preparing employment data for youth in other countries, with Japan and Germany topping the list.

The UP government is actively seeking overseas employment opportunities for its skilled workforce, inspired by the success of

state workers in Israel's construction sector. The Labour and Employment Department is now focusing on Japan and Germany, where demand for caregivers and nurses is high. Japan has a significant need for workers in the old-age care sector, particularly for professionals who can assist the elderly. Meanwhile, Germany is facing a shortage of qualified nurses. According

to the Labour Department, workers in these countries can earn up to Rs 2 lakh per month, along with housing and food facilities.

Dr MKS Sundaram, Principal Secretary of Labour and Employment, stated that the expertise of UP's skilled workers in Israel has garnered global attention. Under the UP-Employment Mission, the government is negotiating with industries

in Germany and Japan to secure job placements.

To prepare youth for international jobs, the state government has developed specialised training modules. These programmes will focus on skill development tailored to market demands, ensuring candidates meet professional standards. An online portal will be launched to streamline the process, allowing

job seekers to register and explore opportunities in different countries. Employers can also use this platform to recruit skilled workers as per their requirements.

In Germany, job openings include positions in hospitals, specialised clinics and rehabilitation centres, with roles like caretakers for the elderly offering salaries up to Rs 2 lakh for five to eight hours of work per day.

## India's maritime vision: from SAGAR to Indo-Pacific...

**(Cont. from page - 2)** those living in the region. If SAGAR was the external outreach of India, in the national context it was complemented by the Sagarmala port-led development initiative.

### Look East policy

For long, India has been criticised for its continental bias, that it was focused on its northern and north west frontiers to the neglect of its vast maritime interests. However, this has been changing. Since the launch of its Look East policy in 1992 which evolved into the proactive Act East policy in 2015, India has reclaimed its maritime legacy. PM Modi recently released a special coin commemorating 1000 years of Emperor Rajendra Chola's naval achievements.

The Indian navy has been in the forefront of maritime diplomacy through capacity building initiatives, joint exercises, plurilateral conferences, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and Search and Rescue (SAR) activities. The 2004 tsunami established India's credentials in disaster relief operations.

India came to be recognised as the first responder and net security provider in the IOR, particularly to states in its neighbourhood. India's prompt assistance to Myanmar in the aftermath of the devastating Cyclone Nargis

in 2008 and being the first country to deliver drinking water to the Maldives after a freshwater crisis in that country in end 2014 consolidated that image. In March, 2025 India mounted a huge relief and rescue Operation Brahma to earthquake hit Myanmar.

India has now graduated to becoming a preferred security partner in the Indo-Pacific region forming defence partnerships that not only include joint exercises and capacity building but also exports of defence equipment either as a grant or under a defence Line of Credit at the request of the partner state.

Trilateral maritime security co-operation with Sri Lanka and Maldives which began in 2011, has extended to other Indian Ocean states including Mauritius and Bangladesh with Seychelles as observer under the Colombo Security Conclave that now has a charter and a secretariat in Colombo. The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) which began as an initiative of the Indian navy in 2008 is an inclusive platform to discuss maritime issues and to work out effective response mechanisms. IONS has 25 participating countries from South Asia, West Asia, Africa, southeast Asia and European countries with Indian Ocean territories as well as nine observers

and a rotating chair (India will take over as chair, at the end of 2025). MILAN is a biennial multinational exercise hosted by Indian navy in harmony with India's vision of SAGAR and Act East policy.

A crucial facet of maritime security is enhanced maritime domain awareness. Towards this, India has also been pursuing white shipping agreements with several countries (22 have been concluded till now) and established a state-of-the-art Information Fusion Centre (IFC – IOR) in Gurugram that facilitates sharing of maritime information among member states.

India has a long history of development partnership going back to the period prior to its Independence. Its approach to development partnership has been shaped by its independence struggle, solidarity with other colonised and developing countries and the inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi who declared that "my patriotism includes the good of mankind in general". It is thus that India has been sharing its developmental experiences and technical expertise in a spirit of Vasudhaiva kutumbakam (the ancient belief that the World is One Family). As PM Modi stated in his address to the Ugandan Parliament in 2018, "Our developmental partnership

will be guided by your priorities, it will be on terms that will be comfortable for you, that will liberate your potential and not constrain your future..." The Indian model of developmental co-operation is comprehensive and involves multiple instruments including grant-in-aid, concessional lines of credit, capacity building and technical assistance. Above all, it is unconditional, transparent, sustainable and financially viable.

### Indo-Pacific vision

In June, 2018 at the Shangri La conference, PM Modi outlined India's Indo-Pacific vision. For India, the Indo-Pacific stands for a free, open, inclusive region that "embraces us all in a common pursuit of progress and prosperity". He emphasised ASEAN centrality, a rules-based order, freedom of navigation, unimpeded commerce and peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law. There is great synergy between the Indian approach and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. In November 2019 at the East Asia Summit in Bangkok, India launched the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) a coherent initiative comprising seven pillars of practical cooperation built on the SAGAR vision. India's active participation in the QUAD (Australia, In-

dia, Japan and US) is part of our Indo-Pacific vision. Earlier, in 2014, India established FIPIC (Forum for India-Pacific Islands Co-operation), a strategic initiative for strengthening diplomatic and economic engagement with islands in the Pacific ocean.

It was in 2023, during India's presidency of G-20, whose leitmotif was inclusivity, that the African Union was invited to join the grouping. India's presidency, inter alia, revived multilateralism, amplified the voice of the global south and championed development. India has hosted three editions of the Voice of the Global South summit since then.

Ten years after SAGAR, during an official visit to Mauritius in 2025, PM Modi announced MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions), an updated doctrine. If SAGAR is the sea, then MAHASAGAR denotes "ocean" in Hindi and several other Indian languages. MAHASAGAR marks a strategic evolution from a regional focus on the Indian Ocean to a global maritime vision, with particular emphasis on the global south. PM Modi's recent engagements with Mauritius, Maldives, Trinidad and Tobago, Ghana and now the Philippines are aligned with the MAHASAGAR vision.