



# Visa-free transit for Indian passport holders in Germany

**NEW DELHI:** Germany announced on Jan 12 visa-free transit for Indian passport holders travelling through its airports, aiming to make international travel easier for Indian nationals and strengthen ties between the two countries.

Under the new arrangement, Indian travellers will no longer need a Schengen Airport Transit visa or Type - A Schengen visa,

when transiting through Germany's international airports to a non-Schengen destination within 24 hours.

The exemption does not allow entry into Germany or any other Schengen country. Travellers who leave the airport, even briefly, must still hold

the appropriate visa. The change simplifies travel for those connecting through Germany, removing a significant admin-

istrative requirement for transit passengers. According to Visa HQ, until

recently, Indian travellers transiting through Germany en route to the Americas, Europe, Africa or Latin America had to allow for additional processing time, typically five to seven days, and pay a €60 fee to obtain the required permit. Airlines, meanwhile, often faced last-minute

offloads when passengers arrived without the document, leading to both operational disruptions and reputational strain.

The announcement came in a joint statement issued on Monday, following German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's official visit to India. This marks Merz's first official visit to India since taking office. (Cont. on page - 2 )

## Malaysia Airlines partners with Mumbai Indians

**MUMBAI:** Malaysia Airlines has signed a landmark partnership with the Mumbai Indians, India's most successful cricket franchise, as its Associate Sponsor and Official Global Airline Partner.

The collaboration underscores the airline's strategic focus on sports-led brand expansion and reinforces its commitment to India—one of its fastest-growing international markets. The col- (Cont. on page - 6 )



At the function from left are Adl Kareem, Joint Managing Director of FlyCreative Online Limited, Chairman of Malaysia Airlines Capt Izham Ismail, Flycreative Online Limited CMD VS Abdulkareem and Ibrahim, Sales Malaysia airlines. [More pics on page -6](#)

## India-Thailand tourism offers vast potential: IATO

**NEW DELHI:** India and Thailand share a remarkable cultural affinity. The Ramayana, known in Thailand as Ramakien, continues to shape Thai art and traditions. Tourism between India and Thailand is far more than an exchange of travellers, it is a reflection of centuries old civilisational ties, shared spiritual values, and deep-rooted cultural connections. From ancient maritime routes to the spread of Buddhism and Hindu philosophy, the relationship between the

two nations has evolved organically over time. Today, tourism has become the strongest bridge sustaining and expanding this bond.

Buddhism, which originated in India, remains central to Thai society. Hindu deities such as Lord Ganpati, Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu are widely revered in Thailand, symbolising a harmonious coexistence of faiths that feels instantly familiar to Indian travellers.

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## Indian embassy in Kuwait celebrates World Hindi Day

**KUWAIT CITY:** The embassy of India in Kuwait celebrated "Vishwa Hindi Diwas" or "World Hindi Day" on Jan 10, 2026 at the embassy auditorium. More than 350 people participated, including the faculty and students from all the 25 Indian CBSE Schools in Kuwait and friends of India with special interest in Hindi.

The event showcased the growing interest in Hindi language and Indian culture in Kuwait which hosts (Cont. on page - 2 )



Indian embassy in Kuwait headed by Her Excellency Ambassador Paramita Tripathi along with Indian residents and dignitaries celebrated World Hindi Day in Kuwait [More pics on page -6](#)



## Germany needs labour

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's visit to India (Jan 12-13) is more than a photo opportunity. What made this visit particularly significant is the timing. Germany is recalibrating its foreign policy under the pressure of a protracted war in Ukraine, intensifying US-China rivalry and shortage of labour. Berlin now sees New Delhi not only as an important economic partner but also as a central pillar of Germany's global strategy in an era of geopolitical uncertainty. The success of the visit lies in the breadth, coherence and strategic intent that run through the engagements, from defence and technology to climate finance and people-to-people ties. The joint push for an India-EU Free Trade Agreement reflects a shared recognition that strategic autonomy requires economic interdependence with trusted partners.

In a joint press statement with Prime Minister Modi, Chancellor Merz identified three key areas: international order and closer security co-operation, an expansion of economic relations and co-operation on education and skilled labour.

India, being a major power both on economic as well as military term, is positioning itself as a leading voice of the Global South and a key balancing power in the Indo-Pacific. Against this backdrop, Merz's decision to make India his first Asian destination as Chancellor sends a deliberate message: Germany's "Zeitentwende" (strategic turning point) is no longer confined to Europe; it now extends to Asia, with India at its core.

Opposition parties may criticize the choice of Ahmedabad rather than Delhi for the principal engagements. But there is a reason for this. By beginning with a visit to Sabarmati Ashram and participating in the kite festival, the visit acquired a strong cultural resonance. It evoked shared democratic values and historical memory, particularly Germany's long-standing respect for Mahatma Gandhi's legacy. Yet the symbolism is anchored in substance. The CEO Forum, the business-focused leg in Bengaluru, and the presence of 23 leading German CEOs underscored that this was a working visit with economic outcomes firmly in mind.

India and Germany have long enjoyed cordial ties but often lacked strategic depth. That gap is now visibly closing. The joint statement reads less like a routine diplomatic document and more like a road-map for a comprehensive partnership across sectors. Germany has traditionally been cautious in defence engagement beyond Nato, but the Merz visit signals a new openness. Germany's intent to participate in exercises such as Milan and Tarang Shakti, the deployment of a liaison officer to India's Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region -- and the endorsement of a Defence Industrial Co-operation Road-map collectively point towards a more committed German role in the Indo-Pacific.

As New Delhi diversifies its defence partnerships beyond traditional suppliers, Germany offers advanced technologies, credibility within Europe, and political weight in shaping EU defence attitudes. Co-operation on Eurodrone, submarines, counter-UAS systems, and joint R&D creates the possibility of a more balanced, co-development-based relationship rather than a buyer-seller dynamic. In a world where defence partnerships increasingly shape geopolitical alignments, this is a quiet but important success of the visit.

More than 2,000 German companies are already active in India and more and more Indian companies are also investing in Germany. With a bilateral trade volume of almost US\$50 billion in goods and services, Germany is India's most important partner in the EU. "German and Indian companies are moving ever closer together, especially in future technologies", says Chancellor Merz. The joint push for an India-EU Free Trade Agreement reflects a shared recognition that strategic autonomy requires economic interdependence with trusted partners. AI and telecommunications reflects a shared understanding that technological ecosystems are now geopolitical assets. The new Semiconductor Ecosystem Partnership and the critical minerals joint declaration are especially significant. They align with global efforts to reduce dependence on over-concentrated supply chains and to build trusted technology networks.

### LIPSYNCH

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving."

--Albert Einstein

## India-Thailand tourism offers vast potential: IATO

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"Tourism between India and Thailand is not just about destinations, it is about shared heritage, faith and people-to-people connections that transcend borders," said Ravi Gosain, President of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO).

Thailand has consistently been among the most preferred international destinations for Indian tourists.

Before the pandemic, Indian arrivals crossed two million annually, driven by Thailand's excellent connectivity, warm hospitality, scenic beauty and cultural familiarity. At the same time, Thailand remains an important source market for spiritual and Buddhist tourism to India, with Thai pilgrims visiting Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar and Nalanda.

This two-way movement

of tourists is unique because it is deeply rooted in culture and spirituality. Indians feel culturally at ease in Thailand, while many Thais look to India as a spiritual homeland. This cultural comfort creates opportunities to promote tourism that goes beyond leisure and shopping, towards meaningful, experience-based travel.

It is in this context that a new spiritual landmark in Phuket has emerged, adding a powerful cultural dimension to Indo-Thai tourism. The Lord Shrimant Ganpati Bappa Devalai in Rawai is a replica of Pune's iconic Dagdusheth Halwai Ganpati Temple, one of India's most sacred Ganpati shrines. Built with remarkable attention to detail, the temple stands today as a prominent Hindu spiritual and cultural landmark in Phuket," he said while

sharing that there are many other places to see.

Gosain further said: "Seeing a replica of Pune's Dagdusheth Halwai Ganpati in Phuket is a powerful reminder that faith and culture know no geographical boundaries."

For Indian tourists, a visit to Phuket has traditionally focused on beaches, islands and leisure activities. Since, Phuket is very popular among Indian couples and family visitors, the presence of such a prominent Hindu temple offers an opportunity to combine leisure with spirituality enhancing the overall travel experience.

In today's world, tourism plays an increasingly important role in cultural diplomacy. Temples, heritage sites, festivals and spiritual centres act as soft power instruments, fostering goodwill and mutual respect.

## Indian embassy in Kuwait...

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more than one million Indian diaspora. In the run up to the "Vishwa Hindi Diwas", Hindi recitation competitions were held for three age-group categories among the students of the 25 CBSE schools in Kuwait. The winners were

invited to perform at the embassy auditorium on the occasion of "Vishwa Hindi Diwas". The faculty also joined in and presented beautiful renditions of

Hindi poems. Referring to the message of Prime Minister Modi on the occasion, Ambassador Her Excellency Paramita Tripathi expressed her appreciation to all participants for their enthusiastic involvement in the World Hindi Diwas celebrations.

Ambassador Tripathi presented awards to the winners of the Hindi Recitation Competition and honoured four Kuwaiti nationals, namely:

## Visa-free transit for Indian...

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Prime Minister Modi welcomed the visa-free transit facility, saying it "will not only facilitate and ease travel of Indian nationals but will further intensify people-to-people links" between India and Germany.

Both leaders underlined that strong people-to-people connections are a key pillar of the strategic partnership, pointing to increasing exchanges of students, researchers,

professionals, artists and tourists.

They stressed joint efforts to combat irregular migration, human trafficking and visa or document fraud through full implementation of the Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA). The statement emphasised the value of enhanced co-operation in education, research, vocational training, culture and youth exchanges to deepen mutual understanding.

(i) Mubarak Rashed Al-Azmi (singer), (ii) Saad Dhaher Saadoun Al-Rasheed (former National Guard Officer), (iii) Eman Hussain Ali Alkout (member of Chess Federation, Kuwait) and (iv) Salah A M Khalaf (business), for their knowledge of and interest in Hindi.

World Hindi Day is celebrated annually on Jan 10 to promote Hindi, a language spoken by millions of people worldwide and to spread awareness about its cultural and historical importance. Hindi holds a crucial place not only in India but also on the global stage with a vast diaspora of Hindi speakers across the globe. The embassy has been instrumental in promoting Hindi through a variety of initiatives and events throughout the year such as competitions, workshops and cultural programmes which has fostered a deeper appreciation of the language among local communities and the Indian diaspora.

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Canadian Dollar	64.25	65.72
Australian Dollar	59.81	61.17
Norwegian Krone	8.79	9.05
Swedish Krone	9.61	9.9
New Zealand Dollar	51.21	52.38
Hong Kong Dollar	11.34	11.69
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## AI cancels three US flights due to closure of Iranian airspace

**NEW DELHI:** Air India has cancelled at least three US-bound flights and warned of delays on some Europe services following the closure of Iranian airspace.

The abrupt four-hour closure of Iranian airspace on Thursday, amid volatile internal conditions in the country and heightened tensions with the US, triggered a ripple effect across airline operations from India to the US and Europe. Iran has since reopened its airspace.

Air India cancelled three of its US-bound flights on Thursday morning, with two of them recalled mid-air. The cancelled services were New Delhi–New York (AI101), New Delhi–Newark (AI105) and Mumbai–New York (AI119).

A source said: "The flight

from Delhi to Newark was via Iraq."

Just taxiing when news of the airspace closure came in. The flight was recalled immediately. The plane from Delhi to New York had not entered the airspace in the Gulf region and we recalled it before that, while the flight from Mumbai to New York was within Indian airspace only when we decided to bring it back."

Flights to the US are long-haul services with significantly longer durations, the source said. "They were already flying over Iran due to the Pakistan airspace closure, and now they will have to fly over Iraq. They will need additional fuel and so we decided to cancel their trip. The flights to Europe are comparatively shorter

and we are routing them

Due to the emerging situation in Iran, the subsequent closure of its airspace, and in view of the safety of our passengers, Air India flights overflying the region are now using an alternative routing, which may lead to delays

In a statement on X, the

airline said international flights that were supposed to pass through the region would be delayed.

"Air India flights overflying the region are now using an alternative routing, which may lead to delays. Some Air India flights where currently rerouting is not possible are being

cancelled."

A source at IndiGo said: "The airline is routing all its flights to Europe via Saudi Arabia and the journey could take longer." IndiGo does not operate flights to the US. "Our flights to Almaty and Baku may get cancelled. We are still deciding on it."

## Rs 8.6-lakh-cr investment surge in Gujarat

**NEW DELHI:** India Inc has announced investment commitments totalling Rs 8.6-lakh-crore in Gujarat over the next five years, led by Reliance Industries (RIL) and the Adani Group, underscoring strong corporate backing for India's manufacturing, clean energy and infrastructure push.

Participating in the first Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conclave held at Ra-

jkot where Prime Minister Narendra Modi remained present, Reliance Industries, chairman Mukesh Ambani committed to invest Rs 7-lakh-crore in Gujarat over the next five years, doubling its investments in the state across clean energy, renewable power, artificial intelligence-ready data centres, digital infrastructure, healthcare, education and sports facilities.

"In the last five years we have invested over Rs 3.5-lakh-crore.

Today I am pleased to announce that we will double this to Rs 7-lakh-crore over the next five years creating exponential employment, livelihoods and greater," Ambani said addressing the the event held to focus on investments for Saurashtra and Kutch regions of the state.



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# GULF FAQS

## Married in Dubai, divorced in India: do you need to attest documents in UAE?

I got married in Dubai, but my divorce was finalised in an Indian court. Do I need to have the divorce attested in the UAE?

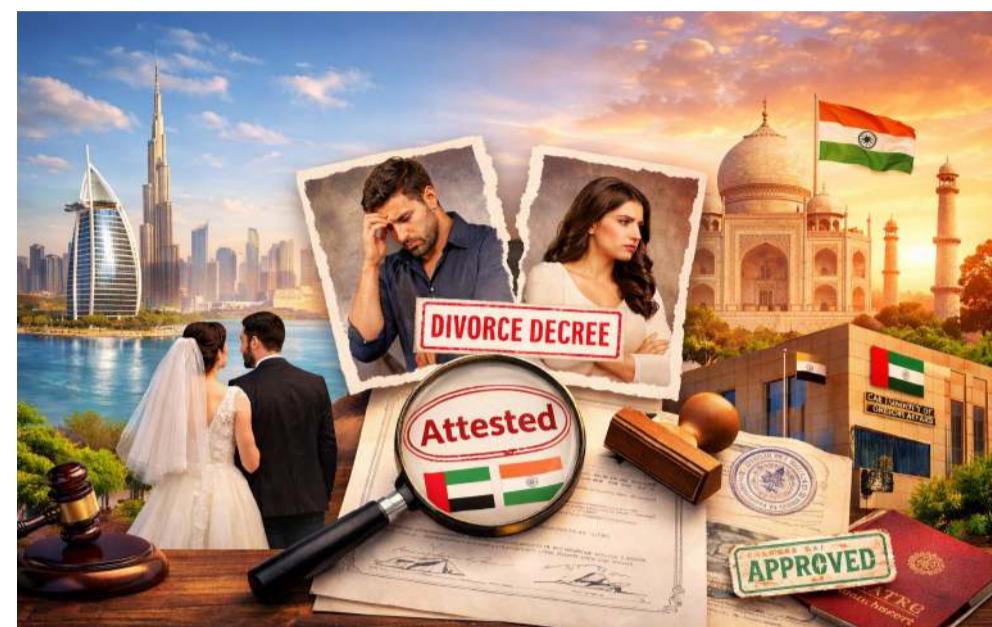
It is assumed that you are a non-Muslim resident; therefore, the provision of the UAE civil procedure code is applicable. A notarised foreign document may be enforced in the UAE in accordance with Article 224 of Federal Decree-Law No. (42) of 2022 Promulgating the Civil Procedure Code, Chapter 4: Execution of Foreign

Judgments Orders and Instruments of the UAE Civil Procedure Code (UAE Civil Procedure Code), which states:

1. An order may be made for the enforcement in the state of notarised documents and Memoranda of Composition certified by the courts of a foreign country on the same conditions laid down in the laws of that country for the enforcement of similar instruments issued in the state.

2. An application for an enforcement order in

Clause (1) of this Article shall be requested by means of a petition submitted to the Execution Judge with the same procedures and conditions stipulated in Clause (2) of Article [222] of this Code. No order for enforcement may be made until after it has been ascertained that the conditions for the enforceability of the document or memorandum have been satisfied in accordance with the law of the country in which it was notarised or certified and that it contains nothing contrary to



morals or public order in the state."

Your marriage was registered in Dubai and the divorce was subsequently obtained from an Indian court; therefore, the Indian divorce decree must be duly attested and legalised

up to the UAE diplomatic mission in India before it can be recognised by UAE courts or authorities for any purposes such as updating marital status records, residency, remarriage or other civil and administrative matters.

## 2026- Year of Family in UAE

The UAE President has directed that 2026 be designated as the "Year of the Family". The move aims to promote the goals of the National Agenda for growth of Emirati families, in addition to consolidating the awareness of the UAE's community, citizens and residents.

This was announced during the "National Family Growth Agenda 2031", attended by UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, which was held as part of the government's annual meetings for the year 2025 in Abu Dhabi, with the participation of leaders and officials from federal and local authorities.

The new theme highlights the importance of preserving family cohesion and strong family relations that unite family members, as they are the basic pillar on which a strong and prosperous society is based. It also focuses on families' roles in instilling the authentic values of cooperation, communication and harmony that characterise UAE's community and passing them

on to future generations to preserve and perpetuate them.

The President affirmed that the growth of the Emirati family is related to "our existence, our identity, the future of our nation, and our national security". The leader added that its growth represents a national priority, as the family, its stability and its strength are a fundamental pillar for the stability and prosperity of the nation in the long term.

During the Year of Fam-

ily and the foundation of its prosperity. Sheikh Mohamed stressed the need for all sectors, from health to education, housing, economy, media and others to play their part in this regard by supporting the state's initiatives and plans, and by promoting awareness of the importance of the family in the national discourse and among members of society.

The leader concluded by saying family growth is vital for our present and fu-

an, that: "The family is the foundation of any strong society."

To work towards the agenda, a national task force has been formed comprising more than 20 federal and local government entities concerned with the issue of family growth, focusing on three tracks:

\*Policies and Programmes

\*Behavioral Interventions

\*Reproductive Health

The first track is concerned with reviewing current policies and programmes that directly or indirectly affect family growth, while the second track focuses on understanding the behavioral and social motives for family growth through field interviews with Emirati families in various regions of the country.

Meanwhile, the third track is concerned with reviewing current reproductive health initiatives and understanding the challeng-

es they face in order to address them.

The UAE's Ruler said the Ministry of Family was established to develop national strategies that promote its growth and its role in society in consolidating values, national identity and education alongside traditions and customs. He stressed that the Emirati family is the first line of defence in order to preserve our culture, values and identity.

Sheikh Mohamed further added that addressing the challenges of family growth is not limited to the Ministry of Family Affairs alone, but is a collective responsibility that requires the participation and co-ordination of all components of the national system, starting from government agencies to the private sector and society as a whole.

Since its launch in 2015, the "Years of the Emirates" initiative continues its role in connecting everyone who considers the Emirates their home with national priorities, and inspiring collective action and positive behavior through local storytelling.



ily in 2026, the initiative aims to support the status of the family and enhance its growth and continuity as the basic pillar of society.

Sheikh Mohamed pointed to the saying of the Founding Father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan

# Malaysia Airlines partners with Mumbai Indians



(Cont. from page - 1) laboration marks a major milestone in the airline's India growth strategy, aligning Malaysia Airlines with one of the world's most followed cricket franchises and one of India's most powerful sports brands.

The announcement was celebrated with the symbolic release of 100 kites at Jio World Gar-

dens in conjunction with Makar Sankranti, representing the fusion of cultures through sport and travel. The event was attended by Mumbai Indians' Head Coach Mahela Jayawardene, and senior representatives from both organisations.

With a global fan base of over 55 million, the Mumbai Indians partnership offers Malaysia

Airlines a high visibility platform to connect with audiences across India and international markets, extending its hallmark Malaysian Hospitality to fans worldwide.

Datuk Captain Izham Ismail, Group Managing Director of Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG), said: "India remains a cornerstone of our international network, with 80 week-

ly flights across 10 cities. This partnership is a strategic commercial investment that helps us engage a highly passionate audience while reinforcing Malaysia's position as the preferred gateway to Asia. By combining world-class cricket with Malaysian Hospitality, we aim to strengthen tourism, trade, and cultural ties between our two na-

tions."

A Mumbai Indians spokesperson added: "We are delighted to partner with Malaysia Airlines, a brand that shares our focus on excellence, global engagement and fan connection. Together, we look forward to offering unique travel and lifestyle experiences that celebrate the shared passion for sport and culture."

## Saudia, AI sign codeshare accord for better connectivity

(Cont. from page - 1)

Gassim, Giza, Madinah and Taif. The inclusion of codeshare services on the Jeddah–Riyadh route also allows travellers greater flexibility to arrive in one

city and depart from another. Connections to select international destinations are expected to be added later this year. Commenting on the partnership, Ibrahim Al-Omar, Director Gener-

al of Saudia Group, said: "The codeshare agreement with Air India marks a strategic step forward, given both airlines' long histories and their shared commitment to increasing con-

nnectivity within their home markets and between their countries, while offering guests broader access to more destinations through simplified travel procedures that elevate the overall

travel experience."

He added, "Saudia's presence in India spans over 60 years, during which we've proudly served a wide range of guests and helped foster stronger ties between our two nations. Saudi Arabia is a great place to visit, and with seamless e-visas, stopover visas, and also visa-on-arrival for eligible Indian passport holders, it has never been easier to visit the Kingdom."

Campbell Wilson, CEO, Air India, said: "Saudi Arabia is amongst our most important markets in the Mid-East, with the country fast transforming into a major international gateway to the region."

## Russian job racket: case against travel agents

**LUDHIANA:** The police have registered a case against two travel agents for allegedly duping four youths of Rs 14.29 lakh by sending them to Russia.

The accused agents got the youths admitted to a blacklisted college in Moscow, from where they were detained. The youths were lodged in a jail where they faced torture for seven days. The authorities al-

legedly forced them to eat beef and tried to recruit them into the Russian army to fight against Ukraine. When they were deported, the authorities refused to return their cash and belongings. The accused were identified as brothers Gurpreet Singh and Sandeep Singh, owners of Khalsa Immigration and Education Consultant, Ludhiana.

The complainant, Sahil

Singh, said he, along with three youths, had contacted the agents after reading an advertisement on Instagram. The accused allegedly promised the youths admission in a valid college in Russia, for which they all paid Rs 14.29 lakh to the accused in cash and through online transactions. The complainant alleged that after they reached Russia, they were detained by the

authorities from the college. After questioning them, they were lodged in a jail where they were subjected to torture.

Sahil Singh alleged that one of the accused agents had reportedly left the country, while the other continued to issue them threats. The accused agent also filed a counter-complaint against him to pressure them.

## Indian embassy in Kuwait celebrates World Hindi Day



Indian embassy in Kuwait headed by Her Excellency Ambassador Paramita Tripathi along with Indian residents and dignitaries celebrated World Hindi Day in Kuwait