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MUMBAI: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 • VOL. NO. 2 • Issue No. 64 DIV OF FLYCREATIVE ONLINE LIMITED (A unit of Creative Group) • 8 PAGES

SKAL INDIA'S THREE-DAY CONGRESS CONCLUDES IN MUMBAI

Skal India's clarion call for innovation, collaboration and sustainable tourism

MUMBAI: "India is now firmly at the centre of global Skål activity," says Shekhar Divadkar, president, Skål International Asia. "This congress reflects the vibrancy and energy of Indian tourism and hospitality professionals, who are increasingly shaping conversations at both regional and global levels. The future of Skål lies in Asia, and India is leading the way."

He was speaking at the inauguration of the three-day Skal India national congress "This congress is not just about numbers; it is about values, vision and vitality," said Dr Mukesh Batra, president, Skal International, Mumbai South, which is the host club. Skål



Inaugural session of the Skal India National Congress 2025 in progress at Sahara Star Hotel in Mumbai.

International, founded in 1934, is the world's largest tourism network with over 12,000 members in over 450 clubs across 85 countries. It unites professionals from all sectors of tourism—hotels, airlines, travel agencies, tour operators and tourism boards—under the motto "Doing Business Among Friends. The congress is also creating vibrant opportunities

president and director region 10, Skål International, adds: "Skål is unique because it blends business with friendship, creating an ecosystem where tourism leaders collaborate, innovate, and work collectively towards sustainable growth. India's role is pivotal in this journey."

for Skålleagues to interact, network, and embody the philosophy of "Doing Business Among Friends."

Delegates from across India and abroad are participating in sessions,

networking breaks, and fireside chats. Over 200 events hosted nationwide by Skål clubs in the past year are being celebrated, highlighting the strength of the grassroots network.



Dr Shashi Tharoor (MP and former minister), Skal Host Presidet Dr Mukesh Batra and CMD of Fly Creative Online Limited Mr VS Abdulkareem and other dignitaries at the Skal meeting.

Glimpses of Skal India National Congress 2025 on Pg 8

Let's make tourism a national priority, says Shashi Tharoor

MUMBAI: Speaking on the topic of attracting international tourists to India, Shashi Tharoor, former minister for external affairs, author and former diplomat, opined that India's diversity and heritage are powerful drivers of international goodwill and co-operation.

Dr Tharoor, speaking at Skal meeting, wondered how city



states like Singapore and Dubai, which are smaller than some of Indian cities, are attracting 10 or 20 times more tourists than India. He pointed out that tourism can employ much more people than manufacturing. Automation in manufacturing sector can reduce jobs, but tourism has scope for employment for skilled, semi-skilled and even unskilled people.

Such a wonderful and colourful country like India should attract more tourists. Let's build more hotels, resorts and tourism-related amenities for the comfort of tourists, he said." Make tourism a national priority" Dr Tharoor said expressing his happiness over the fact delegates from all over the world are attending the Skal 2025 Congress.

Paramita Tripathi India's next ambassador to Kuwait

NEW DELHI: The Union government has appointed Ms. Paramita Tripathi (IFS-2001) as the next Ambassador of India to Kuwait. Currently serving as Joint Secretary in the ministry, she is expected to take up her new assignment shortly. Ms Paramita, a career diplomat, assumed the position of Deputy High Commissioner at the High Commission of India in Singapore on Dec 2



, 2013. Since joining the IFS in 2001, she has had served in a number of important roles. At the MEA in New Delhi, she worked on the Pakistan and UN

desks between 2005 and 2008, and later in the East Asia Division, focusing on Japan, China and Korea.

Her overseas assignments include postings in Brussels (2003-2005) and Tokyo (2008-2011). Ms Paramita holds a Master's degree in Geography from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She is proficient in English, Hindi and Bengali, with functional knowledge of French.



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Saudi Arabia is a major trade partner of India and to further strengthen the friendship and trade relations between Saudi Arabia and India, our special edition will be communicating goodwill messages to His Highness King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and the people of the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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UAE airfares dip; flights to India now cheaper

DUBAI: Airfares in the UAE have fallen to some of their lowest levels of the year, thanks to the start of the offseason in early Sept and a decline in global oil prices, which contributed to reduced fuel costs for the airlines.

According to Cleartrip Arabia data, the average airfare between May and July was around Dh1,600-Dh1,750. Sameer Bagul, chief business officer at Cleartrip Arabia, said a combination of seasonal factors and strategic revenue management by airlines drives the drop in airfares across the UAE. Meanwhile, he said airlines are launching early bird offers to fill seats ahead of the anticipated surge for festivals such as Navratri starting in Sept and Diwali travel season in Oct, ensuring high load factors and maximising revenue when the season starts in Nov and demand soars.

"This confluence of post-summer seasonality, targeted promotional fares, and evolving travel

behaviours' is resulting in lower ticket prices. In addition, over the past few months, oil prices have shown a decline. Projections for the next few months indicate that global oil prices are expected to remain under downward pressure, potentially dropping to \$58 per barrel by the fourth quarter of 2025," said Bagul. Rashida Zahid, vice president of operations at musafir.com, said Ramadan, as well as the post mid-Sept and Oct period, are the off-peak seasons that see the lowest fares in a year.

She also noted some people don't travel during (Cont. on page - 7)

Remittances from Saudi jump 15pc to \$4bn in July

RIYADH: Expatriates in Saudi Arabia sent SR14.91 billion (\$3.95 billion) abroad in July, a 15.4pc increase from the same month last year.

Figures from Saudi Central Bank, also known as SAMA, showed that transfers by Saudi nationals also climbed, rising

MUMBAI: In line with its continued focus on growing its overseas network and expanding its footprint in Europe, India's largest airline IndiGo plans to launch direct flights to Athens in Greece in Jan and will be using its first Airbus A321XLR aircraft for these flights.

IndiGo expects to take delivery of its first A321XLR—the extra-long-range variant of the Airbus's popular narrow-body jet A321—by the end of the year, after which it plans to operate thrice-weekly Delhi-Athens and Mumbai-Athens services from early January. Given that the airline is using damp-leased wide-body aircraft to operate flights to other points in Europe, Athens is slated to be the first European destination that IndiGo will fly to using its own aircraft.

"The airline is all set to bring home India's first A321XLR by the end of 2025 and begin six weekly direct flights to Athens by early January 2026,



subject to regulatory approval. This milestone will make IndiGo the only Indian carrier to offer direct flights between India and Greece," IndiGo said. Notably, Greek carrier Aegean Airlines also plans to launch direct flights between Athens and Delhi from March and Athens and Mumbai from May. Aegean Airlines, too, will also use the A321XLR for its India flights.

The A321XLR is a next-generation narrow-body aircraft designed for longer ranges, allowing IndiGo to expand deeper into Europe while maintaining the cost-efficiency of a single-aisle fleet. With a range of up to 8,700 km, the A321XLR opens access to destinations previously beyond reach of narrow-body op-

erations, enabling non-stop flights from India to Southern Europe with greater efficiency, IndiGo said. According to Airbus, the A321XLR can operate non-stop flights of up to 11 hours, which is not possible for any other narrow-body, or single-aisle, commercial airliner.

Over the past two to three years, IndiGo has expanded its international network by adding destinations in regions including Central Asia and the Caucasus, Southeast Asia, and Africa using its narrow-body fleet. IndiGo recently forayed into Europe, where Air India was the only Indian carrier operating flights, with services to Amsterdam and Manchester using damp-leased Boeing 787 aircraft.



count for most outward transfers, Saudi nationals' personal transfers are also rising. These typically cover overseas educa-

tion, healthcare, holidays, family support and property or investment outlays — categories that expand alongside higher travel and global integration. In Jan-July 2025, expat remittances grew 22.3pc to SR98.6 billion.

The Kingdom's push to (Cont. on page - 7)

Pravasi Rajasthani Diwas on Dec 10

JAIPUR: Encouraged by the success of the Rising Rajasthan Global Investors Summit held in Dec last year, the Bhajan Lal Sharma-led government in Rajasthan has initiated preparations for the grand hosting of Pravasi Rajasthani Diwas on Dec 10.

"We aim to evolve this grand event as an occasion to gratefully recognise the contributions made by non-resident Rajasthanis in key areas such as education, healthcare, tourism, industry and water

management," an official spokesman said.

He added: "We also aim to tap into the wisdom of the diaspora to drive further growth in critical sectors across the state."

The government is making efforts to ensure that the initiative reflects the state's commitment to building a global network of collaboration and celebrating the enduring spirit of Rajasthanis—wherever they may be in the world. To build momentum for the day-long event, a series of

national and international Pravasi Rajasthani Meets and roadshows will be held in cities including Hyderabad, Surat and Kolkata, as well as in the UAE (Dubai and Abu Dhabi).

These roadshows are designed to encourage maximum participation from the diaspora and foster meaningful ties for the state's overall growth and development. The event will also feature thematic sessions led by distinguished experts and diaspora members who

have made notable contributions in their fields.

Special frameworks are being developed to connect these individuals with policymakers and stakeholders, with the goal of driving investment, innovation, and inclusive growth.

To deepen emotional and cultural bonds, a short film titled Panch Gaurav will be showcased during the event, highlighting the heritage and pride of Rajasthan's districts. Additionally, diaspora mem-

bers who have excelled in social, economic and industrial sectors will be honoured with the Pravasi Rajasthani Samman Award for their achievements.

Chief Minister Sharma emphasised the importance of timely and coordinated preparation, directing officials to appoint nodal officers for each sector and establish strong communication with Rajasthani-origin officers serving in other states and countries.

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FOREX RATES
As on 15th September 2025 (In rupees)

Currency	BillBuy	BillSell
US Dollar	87.72	88.86
British Pound	118.93	120.66
Euro	102.55	104.72
Japanese Yen	59.49	60.43
Swiss Franc (CHF)	109.67	112.1
Canadian Dollar	63.1	64.51
Australian Dollar	58.26	59.52
Norwegian Krone	8.8	9.06
Swedish Krona	9.3	9.57
New Zealand Dollar	52.04	53.18
Hong Kong Dollar	11.13	11.48
Kuwaiti Dinar	294.9581	283.8287
Singapore Dollar	68.17	69.68
Saudi Arabian Riyal	23.08	23.81
United Arab Emirates	23.63	24.31

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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).



Day 6 Departure

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

GULF FAQs

Can employers cancel job offers after issuing them?

I have received a job offer from a mainland company based in Dubai. If I accept the offer and resign from my current position, what would happen if the prospective employer later withdraws the offer? Do I have any legal protection in such a scenario?

In the UAE, an offer letter signed between an employer and its prospective employee may be considered as an agreement but not a contract. In general, an agreement (offer letter) may be an informal agreement, whereas a contract is an agreement which is enforceable by law. Therefore, all contracts are agreements, but not all agreements are contracts.

Generally, when recruiting a prospective employee in the UAE, an employer needs to issue an offer letter that outlines the terms and conditions of employment. Thereafter, the same terms and conditions need to be mentioned in the employment contract of a prospective employee, and both parties may consider including additional terms and conditions only if such additional terms and conditions are advantageous to the employee.

This is in accordance with Article 2(1) of the Ministerial Decree No. 46 of 2022 regarding Work Permits, Job Offers and Employment Contracts Forms, which states, "Utilise the approved standard employment contract that conforms with the job offer when requesting the issuance of the work permit. It is permissible to add more benefits to the employee in the contract than those mentioned in the job offer; it is also permissible to add annexure to the contract provided that it does not conflict with the provisions

of the decree-law and its executive regulations."

Furthermore, an offer letter issued by an employer should be in the format prescribed by the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (MoHRE).



This is in accordance with Article-1 of Administrative Resolution No. 38 of 2022 Concerning the Guidelines for Implementing Ministerial Resolution No. 46 of 2022 Regarding Work Permits, Offer Letters and Employment Contract Forms,

which states: "In accordance with the guidelines attached herein, electronic forms (e-forms) provided in MoHRE system for work permits, offer letters, and employment contracts shall be adopted and im-

plemented."

An employer, while applying for a new work permit for an employee, should submit a signed offer letter between the employer and the prospective employee. This is in accordance with Guidelines to

Work Permits, Offer Letters and Employment Contracts Procedures of the Administrative Resolution No. 38 of 2022. Once an employer submits all other documents/requirements along with the signed offer letter and payment of relevant MoHRE fees, the employment contract is signed between the employer and the prospective employee.

Based on the aforementioned provisions of law, initially, you need to contact the MoHRE and check the authenticity of the offer letter issued by your prospective employer. In the event your prospective employer rescinds the offer letter, the MoHRE may not accept your complaint related to such rescission of offer, as you have not signed an employment contract with your prospective employer and the MoHRE has not issued you a work permit.

An employer or an em-

ployee may be considered as contractual parties to the employment only if a valid employment contract is registered with MoHRE, and therefore, without having a work permit, an employer and an employee may not fall under the purview of MoHRE. You may request your prospective employer to issue the offer letter to you in the MoHRE prescribed format if the offer letter which has already been issued to you is not in accordance with the MoHRE prescribed format. Therefore, in the event your prospective employer rescinds the offer letter issued to you, you may consider filing a civil case against the prospective employer in the court which has jurisdiction in the UAE to determine the matter for the monetary loss and other damages caused to you due to the rescinding of the employment offer letter issued to you.

Is 90-day notice necessary for rent hike in dubai?

The Dubai Land Department has said that if a landlord gave the required 90-day notice and the previous index supported a rent increase, but the new index does not, the renewal date will be based on two factors. First, the previous index will be applied if the contract was renewed before 2025; second, the new index will be enforced if the contract is renewed during 2025.

In Jan 2025, DLD launched a new smart rental index which takes into account many new aspects including the classification of the buildings, old and new rentals of the building, and area, among others. This new

index is aimed at bringing transparency to the market.

Majid Al Marri, CEO of the Real Estate Registration Sector at Dubai Land Department, said the index establishes clear and standardised criteria for determining rent increases, aligning them with actual rental values and market trends.

In 2024, Dubai recorded over nine lakh lease contracts, an increase of eight per cent year-on-year. The new rental value calculates the applicable increase based on data drawn from multiple factors, including rental contract values in the building, the average rental values in the area,

and the building classification.

The index utilises artificial intelligence to deliver accurate and standardised rental price assessments to cover all residential areas, including key districts, special development zones and free zones. This enhances market transparency, ensures fairness, and strengthens confidence in Dubai's real estate sector.

The regulator said that the new index will also mitigate the impact of inflation in Dubai. Following a consistent rise over the past four years, rents account for one of the largest shares of the inflation basket in Dubai.

The index is aimed at bringing stability to rentals and maintaining them to a more realistic level.

According to Cushman & Wakefield Core, apartment rents in the emirate increased 16pc and 13pc for villas in 2024. Rents grew for the 16th consecutive quarter in the fourth quarter of 2024.

"The smart rent index helps curb inflation and enables stakeholders to make informed investment decisions based on reliable data," said Al Marri. Dubai Land Department added that it would regularly update the Index to ensure a fair and balanced approach for landlords and tenants.

Experience Abu Dhabi-India Roadshow 2025



Remittances from Saudi... How much gold you can bring from Dubai

(Cont. from page - 2) ward a cashless economy has also made cross-border transfers faster and cheaper. SAMA data showed retail e-payments rose to 70pc of consumer transactions in 2023, up from 62pc in 2022, as national rails processed 10.8 billion payments. The shift accelerated in 2024, with e-payments reaching 79pc of retail transactions. Saudi nationals sent SR6.61 billion, up 13.8pc in the same month. World Bank had projected in 2024 that remittances to low-and middle-income countries would grow 2.8pc to \$690 billion in 2025, while cautioning that exchange-rate shifts and broader macro conditions remain key risks.

DUBAI: For Indian expats flying back from Dubai, bringing gold home is common. But few realise that the customs duty you pay depends not only on the weight and form of gold but also on how long you've been away. The longer your stay abroad, the more customs rules shift — sometimes in your favour, sometimes not. Duty-free allowance after one year abroad: If you've been outside India for over a year, you get a small duty-free benefit — but only for jewellery: Men: Up to 20g, worth Rs 50,000. Women: Up to 40g, worth Rs1 lakh. This allowance does not apply to coins, bars or biscuits. If your stay is less than a year- The rules change sharply for shorter stays:

More than six months, but under one year: Gold imports attract a concessional duty of 13.75pc (Basic Customs Duty + Social Welfare Surcharge).



You can bring up to 1kg of gold in any form at this rate. Less than six 6 months: Duty shoots up to about 38.5pc. There's no duty-free allowance at all, not even for jewellery. Extra slabs beyond duty-free limits: Even if you've been abroad for over a year, bringing jewellery above the exemption triggers duty, charged on a

slab basis: Even if you've been abroad for over a year, bringing jewellery above the exemption triggers duty, charged on a slab basis: **Men** 20-50g: three per cent, 50-100g: six per cent, Over 100g: 10pc. **Women** 40-100g: three per cent, 100-200g: six per cent,

over 200g: 10pc . What every expat must keep in mind: Always declare gold beyond your allowance at the Red Channel. Undeclared gold risks confiscation fines, or action under the Customs Act, 1962. Carry invoices with details of weight, purity and price. Customs uses daily international gold rates, but receipts prove purchase legitimacy.

UAE airfares dip; flights to...

(Cont. from page - 2) Feb and a couple of weeks of March because it is the end of the fiscal year of their companies. When compared with peak summer travel seasons and the lean period, she noted that due to a drastic drop in travel to India in Sept as schools reopen, airfares

could decline between Dh800 and Dh1,000 on a round trip or up to 25pc . "From mid-Oct , fares begin to rise again. From the third to fourth weeks of Nov until Jan, you see high fares due to festivities, Christmas, the National Day and the New Year."

Glimpses of Skal India National Congress 2025

