



# OVERSEAS NEWS AND EMPLOYMENT

## PASSPORT TO GLOBAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES



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### GOOD NEWS FOR INDIANS

## Saudi to reopen Haj portal for 10,000 Indian pilgrims

**RIYADH:** The Ministry of Haj of Saudi Arabia has decided to reopen the Haj (Nusuk) portal for 10,000 pilgrims. This decision has been made considering the availability of space in Mina (the city near Mecca). The Ministry of Minority Affairs of the government of India has informed that Combined Haj Group Operators (CHGOs) should complete their processes without delay. Haj will take place in June this year. Haj travelers will start going to Saudi Arabia from May.

As many as 26 CHGOs failed to comply with the deadline set by Saudi Arabia for completing the Haj process. As a result, they were unable to fulfil the necessary contracts for camps, hotels and trans-



portation in Mina. Following this, the government of India contacted the Saudi Haj Ministry. After the intervention of the Indian government, the Saudi Haj Ministry has agreed to reopen the portal.

The Ministry of Minority Affairs of India has stated that some CHGOs were unable to meet the Saudi Arabian deadline, resulting in an unfulfilled Haj quota. To complete this remaining quota, Saudi Arabia has reopened the portal for 10,000 pilgrims. According to the Indian government's Haj policy for 2025, the Haj Committee of India manages 70pc of the total Haj quota allocated to the country, while the remaining 30pc is given to

(Cont. on page-2)

## US India's largest trading partner

**NEW YORK:** The US remained India's largest trading partner for the fourth consecutive year in 2024-25 with bilateral trade valued at US\$ 131.84 billion. The trade surplus with America has touched \$41.18 billion in the last fiscal from \$35.32 billion in 2023-24.

In 2024, India's main exports to the US included drug formulations and biologicals (\$8.1 billion), telecom instruments (\$ 6.5 billion), precious and semi-precious stones (\$5.3 billion), petroleum products

(\$4.1 billion), gold and other precious metal jewellery (\$3.2 billion), ready-made garments of cotton, including accessories (\$2.8 billion) and products of iron and steel (\$2.7 billion).

In the last fiscal, India's exports to China contracted 14.5pc to \$14.25 billion as against \$16.66 billion in 2023-24. The imports, however, rose by 11.52pc in 2024-25 to \$113.45 billion against \$101.73 billion in 2023-24.

The trade deficit with Chi-

(Cont. on page-2)

## Saudi announces new hotel, accommodation rules for Haj

**RIYADH:** The Ministry of Tourism in Saudi Arabia has instructed all hospitality establishments in Makkah to avoid providing accommodation to individuals who do not possess a Haj permit or an official entry

permit for work or residence in the city during the Haj season.

According to a report in the Saudi Gazette, this directive will take effect from April 29 (DhulQada 1, 1446) and will re-

(Cont. on page-7)

## Now, ATM on rails

**MUMBAI:** Railways has launched the country's first-ever ATM on the Mumbai-Manmad Panchavati Express so that passengers can withdraw money mid-journey, without waiting to reach a station or depend on nearby banks. The automated teller machine completed its successful trial run this month.

"The ATM has been put in place on board the Panchavati Express on a trial basis," said Swapnil Nila, chief PR officer of Central Railway.

This is part of the Railways' Innovative and Non-Fare Revenue Ideas Scheme (INFRIS). Developed in collaboration with the Bhusawal division of Railways and Bank of Maharash-

tra, the ATM has been placed inside a small cubicle that was a pantry section, towards the rear end of an AC coach.

To ensure safety, the ATM is fitted with a shutter system and is monitored by CCTV cameras round-the-clock. The area has been repurposed with a shutter door, ensuring both security and ease of use as the train speeds past towns and fields.

To accommodate the machine, modifications were carried out at the Manmad Railway Workshop, and railway authorities are now monitoring the ATM's performance, with a special focus on maintaining seamless network connectivity along the entire route.

### one OVERSEAS NEWS AND EMPLOYMENT

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## Trump's hasty retreat

"Till the enemy's real strength is assessed, he should be kept in friendly terms", said Chanakya, the great Indian Guru on statesmanship. He was talking about the mistakes leaders make while making hasty decisions. Even after centuries, Chanakya's words have turned prophetic in the case of US President Donald Trump's decision on tariff and its hasty part withdrawal. Trump miscalculated his "enemies", particularly China, while rushing with the decision to impose reciprocal tariff.

After much bravado on tariff, Trump has hit the brakes, opting instead for a 90-day pause that has sparked both celebration and scepticism across global markets. Trump realised that the reciprocal tariff move will badly affect the US economy more than anybody else. As a face-saver, now he says another bill on tariff will come! What's more, the Trump administration is rolling back on the enforcement of certain types of



white-collar crimes, including cases related to foreign bribery, public corruption, money laundering and crypto markets. This will help Adani and Cognizant. Is this a calculated manoeuvre in the art of negotiation or a reluctant retreat in the face of mounting resistance? Trump's leadership has always hinged on unpredictability and bravado, a strategy that has served him both as a disruptor and a divider. And the recent tariff manoeuvre is no exception.

After weeks of firm posturing, with threats of harsh penalties for trading partners, the sudden shift to negotiation signals either a strategic pause for leverage or a reactive course correction amid political and economic pressure. Regardless of the motive, the decision has tangible consequences. Stock markets rebounded almost instantly --- a clear indicator that investors feared the fallout of an all-out trade war.

China which is on a retaliatory mood, has asked its airlines to stop taking deliveries of jets from American aviation giant Boeing as the trade war between Beijing and the US heats up. Beijing has also asked its carriers to suspend purchases of aircraft-related equipment and spare parts. Since Trump took office in January, the world's two largest economies have been locked in a tit-for-tat tariff war, with the US now charging levies of up to 145pc on imports from China. Beijing has reacted furiously to what it calls unlawful "bullying" by Washington and has imposed retaliatory duties of 125pc on US imports, dismissing further hikes as pointless.

In the US, treasury yields had been slipping and corporate leaders are increasingly vocal about the uncertainty such tariffs were hitting the supply chains. Even Republican allies began questioning the wisdom of escalating trade conflicts without clear objectives or deadline. The pressure was not just international, it was coming from within. Allies and adversaries alike need consistency in order to engage in meaningful negotiations.

For India, there is a wonderful opportunity in this trade turmoil. By choosing not to react harshly or retaliate against the US, India can handle Trump with pragmatism. It is not an easy task, especially when you have to balance the interests of your own industries and exporters against a maverick who wants his own way. What's more, this would be the right time for India to relook at its own protectionist tendencies that have helped red tape and licence Raj.

### LIPSYNCH

"A family with many mouths needs a wise decision-maker." —A Chinese proverb

# Remittances by Saudi-based expats hit \$3.41 billion

**RIYADH:** Expatriate remittances from Saudi Arabia surged to SR12.78 billion (\$3.41 billion) in February, marking a 37.04pc increase compared with the same month last year.

Figures from Saudi Central Bank, also known as SAMA, also reveal transfers made by Saudi nationals rose 33.53pc during the same period to reach SR6.24 billion. This surge reflects a combination of domestic labour market momentum and broader international factors. The sharp rise is largely attributed to the Kingdom's accelerating economic activity, particularly the rollout of Vision 2030 megaprojects, which has driven strong demand for foreign labour. As hiring increased, wage growth in key sectors also improved, giving expatriate workers greater

sending power.

The Kingdom's stable currency, zero tax on personal income and remittances and enhanced financial transfer channels made it easier and more cost-effective for workers to send money abroad.

According to Tuscan Consulting's 2025 Salary Guide for the UAE and Saudi Arabia, salary trends in both countries are influenced by economic growth, talent demand and nationalisation policies. In the King-

dom, the surge in Vision 2030 megaprojects has intensified the demand for skilled professionals, leading to competitive compensation packages, particularly in sectors like technology, finance and healthcare. While salary increases have moderated compared with the post-pandemic period, employers continue to offer attractive incentives to retain top talent.

The guide also noted that Saudi salaries for specific roles are approx-

## India to take up 50 airport projects

**NEW DELHI:** The government is set to take up 50 airport development projects, including new airports, in the next five years as holistic efforts are being made to boost the country's aviation

ecosystem. India is one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets.

Currently, there are 159 operational airports in the country and the number has doubled compared with 74 in 2014. Civil Aviation Secretary Vumlunmang Vualnam said efforts are being made in a holistic manner to develop the aviation ecosystem, including supporting airlines and scaling up flying training organisations. In five years, the plan is to have 50 airport development projects. This will include new airports as well as significantly enhancing existing airports, he said.

While emphasising that the government is focused on Public Private Partnership (PPP) for development of airports, the secretary said there is also a "well-oiled mechanism".

## Amravati airport inaugurated

**AMRAVATI** (Maharashtra): Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the inauguration of Amravati airport, terming it as "great news" for Maharashtra.

"The inauguration of Amravati airport is great news for Maharashtra, especially for the Vidarbha region. The active airport in Amravati will boost commerce and connectivity," Modi

## US India's...

(Cont. from page-1) na has widened by about 17pc to \$99.2 billion in the last fiscal from \$85.07 billion in 2023-24. China continues to be the second largest trading partner of India with \$127.7 billion two-way commerce in 2024-25 compared with \$118.4 billion in 2023-24.

China was India's top trading partner from 2013-14 till 2017-18 and also in 2020-21. Before China, the UAE was the country's largest trading partner. The US has been the largest partner since 2021-22.

in response to the X post of Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu.

Earlier, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that the city of Amravati would get special recognition due to the state-of-the-art Amravati Airport and Pilot Training Centre.

"By completing the developmental works in Vidarbha and bringing this region into the mainstream of development, priority will be

(Cont. on page-7)

## Saudi to reopen Haj Portal...

(Cont. from page-1) private Haj group organisers. The ministry reported that Saudi Arabia has allocated a quota of 1,75,025 (1.75 lakh) for India for 2025.

Last week, Secretary of the Ministry of Minority Affairs Chandra Shekhar Kumar and Joint Secretary CPS Bakshi arrived in Jeddah to review the preparations for the Haj for Indian pilgrims.

Minister of Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju has also visited Saudi Arabia earlier this January. During this visit, he had signed a bilateral agreement for Haj 2025. It is worth noting that this year's Haj will take place between June 4 and June 9, 2025. However, the final date will depend on the sighting of the moon of the Islamic calendar's last month -- Zil Hijjah.



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## FOREX RATES

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| Currency             | Buying  | Selling |
|----------------------|---------|---------|
| US Dollar            | 84.99   | 86.10   |
| British Pound        | 112.38  | 113.94  |
| Euro                 | 96.34   | 98.38   |
| Japanese Yen         | 0.60    | 0.61    |
| Swiss Franc (CHF)    | 103.66  | 105.90  |
| Canadian Dollar      | 60.99   | 62.35   |
| Australian Dollar    | 53.83   | 55.02   |
| Norwegian Krone      | 7.94    | 8.17    |
| Swedish Krona        | 8.59    | 8.85    |
| New Zealand Dollar   | 50.04   | 51.16   |
| Hong Kong Dollar     | 10.81   | 11.14   |
| Kuwaiti Dinar        | 282.114 | 274.374 |
| Singapore Dollar     | 64.44   | 65.90   |
| Saudi Arabian Riyal  | 22.36   | 23.06   |
| United Arab Emirates | 22.9    | 23.55   |

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## Stocks turn bullish, massive gain by Sensex

MUMBAI:The equity benchmark indices, the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) Sensex and the National Stock Exchange (NSE) Nifty 50 staged a strong rebound from lows of the day in Thursday's intra-day trades, and were seen quoting higher for the fourth straight day.

Reliance Industries and Bharti Airtel were the top movers on the Sensex and Nifty; whereas stocks such as Eternal (formerly known as Zomato), Sun Pharma, Adani Ports, Tata Consumer, Grasim and Trent were the other major gainers.

The Sensex and the Nifty, both, had started the day on a jittery note amid tepid cues from global markets owing to the on-going US-China tariff tussle, and the US

Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell warning on potential consequences on the economy from tariffs.

The BSE Sensex opened 76 points lower at 76,868, and soon slipped to a low of 76,666. The BSE benchmark thereafter recouped losses, rallied sharply to an intra-day high of 78,617 - up 1,951 points from the day's low. The Sensex finally closed at 78,553 -- up 1,509 points or two per cent.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty 50 index rebounded from the day's low of 23,299, and soared to a high of 23,872. The Nifty settled with a gain of 414 points or 1.8pc at 23,852.

"India's recent outperformance is striking. We are the only large market

which has erased all losses incurred after April 2, 2025", highlights V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments.

India has outperformed because its a domestic consumption driven economy will be one of the least impacted by the tariff crisis, believes Vijayakumar.

Further the analysts add that the market is discounting the possibility of a bilateral trade agreement between US and India within a few months. The US regards India as among the four allies (UK, Japan, South Korea and India) with whom the US will strike trade deals first.

In the market today, the recovery was predominantly led by financial shares.



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# GULF FAQs

## Can I request visa sponsorship from my husband after divorce?

My Children and I live in Dubai under my husband's sponsorship. If we decide to get divorced, will my husband be required to continue sponsoring our residency in the UAE? What rights do I have in this situation, especially since I am a homemaker?

As you're a foreigner living in the UAE on your husband's sponsorship, the provisions of Cabinet Resolution No. 65 of 2022 Issuing the Executive Regulations of Federal Law by Decree

No. 29 of 2021 Concerning the Entry and Residence of Foreigners (the "Cabinet Resolution No. 65 of 2022") are applicable.

In the UAE, if a woman gets divorced while living in the country on her husband's sponsorship, she is entitled to apply for a one-year extension of her UAE residency visa. This extension starts from the official date of the divorce. Furthermore, the benefit of this visa extension also extends to the children from the



marriage, provided they were previously under the father's sponsorship at the time of the divorce.

It's important to note that divorce in the UAE

also involves matters such as child custody, alimony and child maintenance, in accordance with the prevailing personal laws of the UAE (UAE Federal

Law No. 28 of 2005 on Personal Status and/or Federal Law No. 41 of 2022 on Civil Personal Status law applicable to non-Muslims).

You may consult with a legal expert in the UAE to better understand your rights, including how the divorce will affect your residency, financial support, and custody arrangements. Additionally, you can contact the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs for more guidance.

## Ex-wife not allowing me to see my children, shall I file a lawsuit?

I am a Muslim man. A year ago, I divorced my wife, who is also Muslim. The court ruled in favour of my ex-wife for custody of the children, a five-year-old girl and a six-year-old boy, in addition to other monthly expenses. The court also ruled that I am allowed to see my children once a week without spending the night with them. My current problem is that my ex-wife has not allowed me to see my children for more than four months, claiming that my children do not want to see me. I found out that my ex-wife is the one who is inciting my children against me, through a video my son sent me, showing my ex-wife doing this. In addition, she is often absent from home and sometimes spends the night outside the house. My question is, do I have the right, according to the Sharia court, to file a lawsuit to revoke custody of my children because of this behaviour of my wife?

According to Article 121 of the New Federal Decree-Law No. (41)

of 2024 on the Issuance of the Personal Status Law, which is supposed to be executed in April 2025, if the child is in the custody of one of the parents, the other parent has the right to visit him/her, take him/her with them for visit, and take him/her for sleepover according to their mutual agreement. In the event of a dispute, the court shall decide what it deems to be in

the interest of the child in custody. The court's ruling shall be enforced compulsorily if the custodian refuses to enforce it. Regarding your case, you have the right to execute the judgment you have in front of the court which will enforce her to let you visit the kids.

As for the custody of the children, Article 115 of the same law states that the right to custody is extinguished in the fol-

lowing cases: a) If one of the conditions that shall be met by the custodian is lost. b) If the custodian fails to perform the duties of custody or is unable to perform them. c) If the custodian moves to a place with the intention of residence, with which the interests of the child in custody shall not be met. d) If the person entitled to custody remains silent about claiming it for a period

exceeding one year from the date on which he became aware of the reason of entitlement without an excuse, unless the interest of the child in custody requires otherwise. e) If the new custodian lives with the person whose custody was lost for a reason other than health disability and f) If the custodian commits a disgraceful act that affects the child in custody.

## Insurance co rejects my accident claim, what to do?

Three months ago, I was involved in a car accident that left my vehicle broken and unrepairable, according to the police and relevant authorities' report. However, the insurance company is currently refusing to pay the value of the car on the pretext that the car licence has expired. Is it permissible for the insurance company to refuse compensation on these grounds, even though the insurance policy expired one month after the accident? What is the appropriate action for me to take?

The insurance company has to compensate you in case you renew the licence within 30 days from the date of the accident, which is the same time of the expiry date of the insurance policy. Chapter 4, Clause 6 of the Unified Motor Vehicle Insurance Policy against Loss and Damage confirms that if the driver fails to renew licence within 30 days from the date of the accident, the insurance company will have the right not to compensate.

The company will not pay any compensation for the following reasons: Damage to the mo-

tor vehicle from accidents which occur when the vehicle is operated by a driver who is not licensed to drive according to the traffic laws or without obtaining a driving licence for the kind of the vehicle or if the driver hold an expired driver's licence and fails to renew it within 30 days from the date of the accident or the licence granted has been suspended by the court or competent authorities or according to the traffic regulations.

This exclusion shall not apply in case the motor vehicle is intended

for rental, as long as the leasing contract is concluded with a person who holds a valid driving licence. You are entitled to raise a complaint with the Insurance Committee claiming the insurance value and any damages you suffered. The committee shall study and decide on the insurance disputes referred to it according to Articles 14 and 15 of the Insurance Authority Board Resolution No. (33) Of 2019 concerning the Regulation of the Committees for the Settlement and Resolution of Insurance Disputes.



## Veeraswamy, London's oldest Indian restaurant, may close down soon

**LONDON:** Veeraswamy, London's oldest Indian restaurant, may be forced to shut down in its 99th year just a few months short of its centenary. The restaurant which won a Michelin star in 2016 offers a menu that it boasts, "journeys through the Hyderabadi and Mughal history of its founding days," combined with, "contemporary expertise".

The Crown Estate which owns Victory House in which Veeraswamy is located, has refused to renew the lease. The restaurant has a prime location on London's famous Regent Street and its owners insist it will be tough to find new premises before the June deadline, which the Crown Estate is insisting on.

Veeraswamy has, over the decades, served celebrity guests including Winston Churchill and actor Marlon Brando.

It was first launched in 1926 by an Anglo-Indian

former army officer Edward Palmer who claimed descent from a British general and an Indian princess. Veeraswamy was said to be his mother's family name. In its early years the restaurant



**Winston Churchill, actor Marlon Brando were celebrity guests.**

served what was termed Anglo-Indian cuisine. Since 1997 it has been run by the successful MW Eats which owns other award-winning restaurants like Chutney Mary and Amaya. MW Eats is owned by former banker Ranjit Mathrani, his wife Namita Panjabi and her sister Camelia Panjabi. The group also owns the mid-market Masala Zone chain.

MW Eats first asked for time to find new premises and when that

was refused has now taken the Crown Estate to court. Ranjit Mathrani told a TV channel that the notice to vacate, "came out of the blue". He said the Crown Estate had offered him more space last year but he wasn't sure he could fill extra tables.

"I think they've come to the view that's it's too tiresome to have a restaurant there, they want it to be all offices," Mathrani told The Times. He added, "they don't give a bugger for history." He also accused the Crown Estate of destroying, "A major London institution."

The Indian restaurant business is different from the 1920s when Veeraswamy was the only one of its kind serving an upmarket clientele. Today, it's estimated there are around 3,600 Indian restaurants in London alone. There are thought to be around 8,000 Indian restaurants spread out across the UK.

## China eases visa rules for Indians

**NEW DELHI:** China has given over 85,000 visas to Indians from Jan 1 to April 9 this year.

Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong said he hopes even more Indians will visit China to see that it is open, safe and friendly. "As of April 9, 2025, the Chinese embassy and consulates in India have issued more than 85,000 visas to Indian citizens travelling to China this year. Welcome more Indian friends to visit China, experience an open, safe, vibrant, sincere and friendly China," he said this in a post on X.

This is happening while US President Donald Trump is warning countries about higher tariffs, especially targeting China. After Trump raised tariffs on Chinese goods, China asked India to join them in opposing what they called the "US abuse of tariffs".

A Chinese embassy spokesperson, Yu Jing, said China's economy is strong and helps the world. She said India and China are both large developing countries, and they should work

together. According to her, trade between the two nations is good for both sides. Chinese government has made it easier for Indian citizens to get visas, with several new relaxations aimed at encouraging tourism and improving ties between the two countries:

Indian applicants can now walk into Chinese visa centres on working days without booking an online appointment in advance. Travellers going to China for short stays no longer need to submit biometric data, making the process quicker and more convenient.

### Amravati airport...

(Cont. from page-2)

given to this work," the chief minister said at the function organised for the launch of passenger flight services and the flight demonstration of the Air India Pilot Training Centre.

Fadnavis added that the PM Mitra Park to be built here will create two lakh jobs, and cotton farmers will benefit from cotton to cloth and further fashion.

## Saudi announces new hotel...

(Cont. from page-1) main in force until the end of the Haj season.

The ministry of interior also announced on April 12 that, starting Tuesday, April 29, individuals holding any type of visa other than a Haj visa will not be allowed to enter or remain in Makkah. In partnership with the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority (SDAIA), the ministry has also launched the Tasreeh Platform—a unified digital system for issuing Haj permits.

This platform facilitates the issuance of licences and permits that authorise both domestic and international pilgrims to enter Makkah and the holy sites. It integrates with the min-

istry of Haj and Umrah through the Nusuk platform.

The platform also enables workers and volunteers involved in Haj activities, as well as the vehicles transporting them, to enter Makkah and the holy sites. Permits can be viewed through the national application Tawakkalna.

Developed by SDAIA in collaboration with all government agencies involved in serving Haj pilgrims, the platform performs the following functions: Enhances technical integration among government and service agencies involved in Haj. Standardises, organises and co-ordinates procedures during the Haj season.

## Globally, India fourth largest automobile producer

**NEW DELHI:** India's automotive industry is the cornerstone of the nation's manufacturing and economic growth, contributing 7.1pc to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 49pc to manufacturing GDP, according to a NITI Aayog report, titled "Automotive Industry: Powering India's Participation in Global Value Chains".

The report was released by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery and senior members of the premier policy think tank of the government. The report outlines India's Global Value

Chain (GVC) potential in the automotive sector and highlights strategic pathways for global leadership.

As the fourth largest automobile producer globally, India possesses the scale and strategic depth to emerge as a global leader in the automotive value chain. The sector spans a vast ecosystem, from vehicle assembly and auto component manufacturing to deep interlinkages with critical industries such as steel, electronics, rubber, IT and logistics.

In recent years, India has seen exponential growth in vehicle pro-

duction, with over 28 million units manufactured in 2023-24 alone. The industry's contribution goes beyond industrial output, and it supports millions of direct and indirect jobs, spurs innovation and is central to India's green mobility transition, industrial ambitions and trade strategy. The global automotive component market was valued at US\$ 2 trillion in 2022, with \$700 billion traded across borders. Despite India's strong manufacturing base, its share in the globally traded auto component market remains at just three per cent.