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HIGH-LEVEL ROUNDTABLE EXPLORES GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES, SKILL DEVELOPMENT, ETHICAL RECRUITMENT CHANNELS

Maharashtra positions itself as strategic hub for India's global workforce mobility

MUMBAI: A high-level round table conference on "International Labour Mobility – Positioning Maharashtra in India's Global Workforce Strategy: Global Opportunities, Maharashtra's Talent" was convened in Mumbai by Maharashtra Minister for Skill Development, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Mangal Prabhat Lodha, bringing together senior bureaucrats from the state and central governments, diplomatic representatives and key stakeholders from the international workforce mobility ecosystem.

The conference deliberated



Maharashtra Skill Development Minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha at the roundtable meeting on global job opportunities in Mumbai

on the growing opportunities for Indian talent in international labour markets and the need for a structured, transparent and sustainable framework to facilitate the mobility of skilled and semi-skilled Indian workers.

A significant part of the programme focused on Russia as an emerging destination for Indian workforce mobility. HE Ivan Fetisov, Consul General of the Russian Federation in Mumbai, along with Matvei Fetisov, Dep-

uty Consul General, made a detailed presentation on Russia's projected workforce requirements, employment opportunities, applicable policies and procedures, compliance requirements and the scope for greater institutional co-operation between India and Russia.

The presentation highlighted the importance of developing a collaborative mechanism between the two countries to facilitate workforce mobility in an orderly, systematic, ethical and compliance-driven manner, while ensuring that workers are

(Cont. on page - 2)

POST-MART TOURS TILL OCT 3

KOCHI: Poised to become the largest edition in its 25-year-long history, the Kerala Travel Mart (KTM 2026), the country's leading tourism and trade event, has attracted a record number of registrations, which include 800 international and 2,250 domestic buyers.

Of the total, 1,200 buyers will attend as hosted buyers, while 300 will participate as non-hosted buyers, taking the total to 1,500 buyers. Chief Min-

CM Satheesan to inaugurate Kerala Travel Mart on Sept 24



Kerala Tourism Minister PC Vishnunadh and others at a press meet announcing the Kerala Travel Mart programme

ister VD Satheesan will formally inaugurate the 13th edition of India's

flagship tourism and hospitality business event at the Lulu Bolgatty Interna-

tional Convention Centre on Sept 24, Thursday.

Kerala Tourism Minister PC Vishnunadh will preside over the function. Excise and Co-operation Minister M Liju will be the guest of honour.

Addressing a press meet here, Vishnunadh said the government aims to develop 100 new tourism destinations over the next five years. As many as 20 tourism destinations would be developed every year, with new destinations be-

ing identified in consultation with tourism industry stakeholders. The government would undertake infrastructure development in these destinations.

There has also been a significant increase in the participation of tourism enterprises and institutions. As many as 383 sellers have completed stall bookings for the event. As many as 25 stalls representing various government institutions will also be part of the mart. More than 45,000 business meetings have already been scheduled for business meets and marketing

(Cont. on page - 2)

Children's passport below 15 to be valid for five years or till age 18

NEW DELHI: Passports issued to children below 15 years of age will now be valid for five years or until they turn 18, whichever is earlier, under new regulations notified by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The Passports (Amendment) Rules, 2026, published in the Gazette of India on Thursday, amend the Passports Rules, 1980. Under revised Rule 12(1A), a standard 36-page passport issued to a child below 15 years will remain valid for five

(Cont. on page - 2)

IndiGo increases fare for infants, also excess baggage

MUMBAI: India's largest airline IndiGo has sharply increased travel fees for infants besides increasing charges for incremental services such as priority check-in, excess baggage and travel certificates.

The infant travel fee, which is applied to infants below two years of age, has been increased to Rs 3,000 from Rs 2,000 since the beginning of Sept. As per sources, this is a periodic recalibration process taken by the airline keep-

ing in mind the current high operation costs.

The hike in infant travel fees is likely to affect around 10 lakh infant passengers and could generate about Rs 90 crore in additional revenue for the

(Cont. on page - 2)

Dubai declares 10-day mourning for Sheikh Ahmed bin Rashid

DUBAI: Dubai has declared 10 days of official mourning following the death of Sheikh Ahmed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, younger brother of Dubai Ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, on Monday at the age of 76.

The mourning period began on Sept 21, with flags to be flown at half-mast across the Emirate.



Sheikh Ahmed served as Deputy Chairman of Dubai Police and Public Security and was also prominent in Dubai's sporting and business sectors.

Domestic Air traffic zooms in August

MUMBAI: India's domestic aviation sector experienced a modest month-on-month rebound in August, carried by routine end-of-summer travel demand, even as overall volumes remained constrained compared with the historic highs recorded during the same period last year.

According to the latest

monthly traffic report released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Indian domestic carriers transported 1.21 crore passengers in August. This represented a little over one per cent sequential uptick over July's figure of 1.20 crore passengers. However, on an annual basis, passenger

(**Cont. from page - 6**)

Children's passport below 15...

(**Cont. from page - 1**) years from the date of issue or until the child turns 18, whichever is earlier.

the notification, dated Sept 15, also amends Rule 8 relating to passport application fees. It states that the fee applicable to each category of passport application will be as specified

in Schedule IV of the rules. The amended rules have come into force from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

The Passports Rules, 1980, were originally notified through GSR 691(E) on Dec 11, 1980. They were last amended through GSR 156(E) on June 20, 2026.

Maharashtra positions itself as strategic...

(**Cont. from page - 1**) appropriately prepared and employers receive competent manpower through authentic recruitment channels.

The subsequent interactive session discussed a broad strategy framework for strengthening international mobility from Maharashtra. Key areas included skill upgradation, occupational competency, language proficiency, international standards, employer requirements, worker preparedness and responsible recruitment practices.

During the delibera-

tions, particular emphasis was placed on ensuring that international recruitment is facilitated through MEA-OE approved Recruiting Agents, providing a recognised and accountable channel connecting genuine overseas employers with prospective Indian workers. Such an approach, it was observed, can contribute to greater transparency, worker protection, data accountability and reduction of unregulated recruitment practices. Speaking on the occasion, VS Abdulkareem, President, Indian Personnel

CM Satheesan to inaugurate Kerala Travel Mart on Sept 24

(**Cont. from page - 1**) opportunities. The scale of the meetings points to the investment and trade opportunities available in Kerala's tourism sector.

"Development works worth Rs100 crore were being undertaken in Fort Kochi alone," he informed. Vishnunadh also visited the Sagara and Samudrika Convention Centres on Wellington Island, the venues for the KTM business meetings to be held from Sept 25 to 27, and reviewed the preparations.

Hibi Eden(MP), MLAs TJ Vinod and Deepak Joy, Tourism Additional Director General Sumit Kumar Thakur, KTM president Jose Pradeep; secretary S Swaminathan, former

president Baby Mathew and treasurer Jibran Asif were present.

Business meets, meetings of tourism policy-makers and sector-specific seminars/ panel discussions featuring national and international experts will also be held during the four-day mart. The post-

mart tours will be organised from Sept 28 to Oct 3. This year, the tours will cover 12 different regions.

A pre-mart tour for invited international and domestic media representatives with three different itineraries will also be organised ahead of the event starting from Sept 19.

Trump extends \$100,000 H-1B visa fee rule

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has extended the \$100,000 payment requirement for employers seeking to bring certain H-1B workers into the US for one more year, saying the restriction has reduced the reliance on lower-paid foreign labour.

The policy, which has

drawn opposition from major firms that rely on skilled foreign workers, will remain in place through Sept 21, 2027, with limited exceptions for workers, companies or industries deemed to be in the national interest, the White House said in a statement.

(**Cont. from page - 6**)

IndiGo increases fare for infants...

(**Cont. from page - 1**)

airline. Passengers carrying excess baggage are now paying Rs 800 per kg, compared with Rs 700 earlier. IndiGo has also raised its priority check-in and boarding charge to Rs 650 from Rs 450, and increased its travel certificate fee to Rs 300 from Rs 200. The fee for unaccompanied minors has been revised to Rs 5,999 from Rs 5,000, an increase of Rs

999.

Not only IndiGo, but other airlines have also revised charges for their add-on services amid a sharp surge in operating costs due to an uptick in jet fuel prices, airspace closures and weakening of the rupee. It also comes at a time when airfares in general have seen a sharp increase.

InterGlobe Aviation, the parent of India's largest

airline IndiGo, reported a standalone net loss of Rs 382 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2026 (Q1FY27) as against a net profit of Rs 2,161 crore in the year-ago period (Q1FY26).

IndiGo's aircraft fuel expenses came in at Rs 10,830 crore in Q1FY27, a massive increase of 86pc year-on-year. Total expenses jumped 34.4pc to Rs 25,853 crore.

tensive institutional ecosystem, has considerable potential to emerge as a major contributor to India's global workforce strategy.

The roundtable also underscored that international labour mobility should not be viewed merely as the movement of workers across borders, but as a strategic economic partnership involving skills, technology, employment, remittances, human-resource development and international co-operation.

The discussions concluded with a shared recogni-

tion of the need for stronger co-ordination among the Government of Maharashtra, Government of India, foreign missions, skill-development institutions, employers and the regulated recruitment fraternity to build a credible ecosystem for international workforce mobility.

The initiative is expected to open further avenues for structured engagement with destination countries, including Russia, and create a stronger institutional pathway for "Maharashtra Talent for Global Opportunities."

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Australian Dollar	67.65	69.11
Norwegian Krone	9.99	10.28
Swedish Krona	9.57	9.85
New Zealand Dollar	54.25	55.44
Hong Kong Dollar	11.98	12.35
Kuwaiti Dinar	317.2488	301.1839
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Emirates partners with Dubai education authority to support global students

DUBAI: Emirates has partnered with Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) to make the emirate more accessible to international students and strengthen its position as a global higher-education destination.

Under a new Memorandum of Understanding, Emirates airline will develop dedicated travel programmes for students enrolled at KHDA-regulated private higher education institutions. The benefits include specially tailored fares, additional baggage allowance and greater flexibility when booking travel to and from Dubai and across the Emirates network.

The airline will also provide travel support for stu-



dents under the Hamdan bin Mohammed Scholarship Programme, while faculty and teaching staff will have access to travel benefits through the Emirates Academic Programme.

The partnership supports Dubai's Education 33 (E33) strategy, which aims to strengthen the emirate's education ecosystem and attract students from around the world.

Emirates will participate in international student recruitment missions and

Study Dubai events, working with KHDA, Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism and TECOM Group to promote Dubai as a study destination.

Separately, Emirates' existing student programme offers eligible full-time students aged 16 to 31 discounts of up to 10pc on Economy Class fares and five per cent on Premium Economy and Business Class fares, along with additional baggage and other benefits, subject to terms and conditions.

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GULF FAQs

Non-compete clauses in Labour Law: everything you need to know

Can you please explain the non-compete clauses in the UAE labour law?

Signing an employment contract in the UAE often means agreeing to more than just a salary and a job title. Buried in the fine print may be a non-compete clause, a legal restriction that could affect where you work, and for whom, long after you've left.

While non-compete clauses are legally recognised in the UAE, they

are not automatically enforceable in all situations. The clause must be reasonable, specific, and directly linked to protecting legitimate business interests.

What is a non-compete clause? Under UAE Labour Law, a non-compete clause is a contractual provision that restricts an employee from working for a competitor or starting a competing business, after their employment ends. These clauses are legally enforceable in the

UAE, but only under specific conditions.

The clause is designed to protect legitimate business interests, such as trade secrets or established client relationships, where an employee's departure could cause genuine commercial harm to their former employer.

To be legally enforceable, a non-compete clause must define three essential elements:

1. Geographic scope: The clause must clearly specify where it applies.

This could be a specific emirate, city or country. Broad or vague geographic restrictions may not be upheld.

2. Duration: The time period must be clearly stated and cannot exceed two years from the date the contract ends. Shorter durations are also permitted, provided they are reasonable.

3. Nature of work and potential harm: The restriction must relate to work that could cause genuine harm to the em-

ployer's legitimate business interests.

When can a non-compete clause be added? Employers can include a non-compete clause when the employee's role involves access to sensitive company information or client networks. This typically applies to positions where the risk of competitive harm is higher, such as managerial, sales or strategic roles.

When is a non-compete clause not applicable? The law also includes safeguards to protect employees from unfair restrictions. In certain situations, a non-compete clause may be considered void or unenforceable.

These include: Unlawful termination by the employer: If the employer terminates the contract in violation of the Labour Law, such as in cases of arbitrary dismissal, the non-compete clause becomes void.

Termination during probation: If the employment contract ends during the probation period, the clause does not apply.

Time limit for legal action: Employers cannot file a case after one year from the date they discover the alleged violation.

Compensation agreement: The clause may be waived if the employee or new employer pays compensation to the previous employer, capped at three months' wages, provided there is written agreement.

In-demand professions: Certain professional categories identified by the ministry may be exempt, particularly if they are considered essential to the national labour market.

When can you resign without notice?

I want to resign from my Dubai company. Is it possible to resign without giving notice to the company?

In most cases, employees in the UAE must serve a notice period before leaving their job. However, there are specific situations where you can resign immediately without serving notice. These exceptions are set out in Article 45 of the UAE Labour Law. You can resign without notice in the following cases:

*If your employer has violated your rights.

*If your employer breaches your rights under the Labour Law, its executive regulations or your employment contract, you may resign without notice — but certain conditions must be met.

* Notify the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (MOHRE) at least 14 days before submitting your resignation.

* Give the employer an opportunity to correct the violation.

*Ensure the employer fails to rectify the issue despite being formally notified by MOHRE.

* If you are assaulted at work.

*If you are assaulted by your employer or their legal representative, you may resign without notice.

In this case, you must report the incident to the relevant authorities and MOHRE within five working days from the date you were able to report it.

* If the workplace poses serious safety or health risks.

*If your workplace exposes you to serious dangers affecting your safety or health and your employer fails to address the issue despite being aware of it, you can resign immediately without serving notice.

* If you are forced to do a different job without your consent.

Agreed in your employment contract — and you have not agreed to the change — you may resign without notice.

In all of the above situations, you can leave immediately and still retain your legal rights, including end-of-service benefits. You do not have to serve notice or pay compensation.

What is the notice period in the UAE? Outside of the exceptions above, the standard rules for termination are set out in Article 43 of the UAE Labour Law. Either the employer or employee may terminate the contract for any legitimate reason, provided that written notice is given, the notice period is at least 30 days and no more than 90 days and the contract continues to be executed during the notice period. The employment contract remains valid throughout the notice period and only ends once the period expires. The employee is entitled to full salary during the notice period, based on their most recent wage. If either party fails to serve the required notice, they must compensate the other party with a "notice

period allowance".

This compensation is calculated based on the employee's last received wage — even if the other party did not suffer any actual damage. If the employer terminates the contract. If you are terminated by your employer, you are entitled to: One unpaid day off per week during the notice period to search for a new job. You may choose which day to take off, provided you inform your employer at least three days in advance.

Can the notice period be reduced? The notice period can be reduced or waived entirely if both parties agree. However, the agreement must not infringe on either party's rights. The notice period must be the same for both employer and employee, unless a shorter period is in favour of the worker. If you're planning to resign, it's important to check your employment contract and ensure your situation meets the legal requirements before leaving without notice.

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has approved a new National Entrepreneurship and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Strategy aimed at creating more than five lakh direct and indirect jobs and increasing the contribution of SMEs to 35pc of the Kingdom's GDP.

Approved by the Saudi Cabinet on Sept 15,

Saudi unveils SME strategy to create over five lakh jobs

the strategy comprises 13 initiatives designed to accelerate business growth, attract innovative global startups and reduce the cost of doing business.

The programme focuses

on improving SMEs' access to finance and markets, strengthening their operational capabilities and developing a more supportive regulatory and innovation environment. It

also seeks to increase SME participation in government procurement, major corporate supply chains and international markets.

Saudi Minister of Commerce and Chairman of the General Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises (Monsha'at), Dr Majid Al-Qasabi said the strategy would help create a more integrated ecosystem in which businesses can grow, expand and compete locally and inter-

nationally.

Among the measures are initiatives to support startups in industrial cities and special economic zones, encourage exports and international expansion, attract and localise innovative global startups and improve financing mechanisms. The strategy also proposes reviewing minimum Saudisation requirements by sector to better reflect the structure of SMEs.

Honda to invest Rs 450cr in Karnataka

BENGALURU: Japanese carmaker Honda Cars India (HCIL) has announced the Phase II expansion of its Spare Parts Warehouse facility at Doddaballapura, near Bengaluru. Spread across an area of about 80,000 sq. metres, the Phase II expansion will involve an investment of Rs 450 crore and cater to Honda's 4-wheelers, 2-wheelers and power products businesses in India. The automaker said the expansion will strengthen Honda's spare parts distribution network by enhancing storage and distribution capacity, improving operational efficiency and enabling faster availability of genuine spare parts across its net-

work.

Takashi Nakajima, President and CEO, Honda Cars India, said the expansion reflects Honda's



HONDA

continued commitment to strengthening its infrastructure in India and supporting the growing needs of customers. "With enhanced capacity and operational capabilities, the expanded facility will enable faster availability of genuine spare parts and further strengthen our after-sales support," Takashi said.

"As Honda's businesses

continue to grow in India, investments such as these will play an important role in building a strong and future-ready ecosystem to serve our customers," Takashi added. Phase I of the facility spans 60,000 sq. metres and became operational in June 2025.

The overall facility after Phase II expansion will be 140,000 Sq. metres and will incorporate advanced warehousing systems, energy-efficient solutions and scalable infrastructure designed to meet Honda's long-term requirements. Phase II of the project will be developed by Uno Min-da Infra LLP.

Sunday passport collection in Dubai to help NRIs

DUBAI: Indian expats in the UAE, who struggle to reach a passport centre during the week or must wait over the weekend to get their passports delivered by courier, now have a solution.

A new "Sunday passport collection counter" is now open at all 16 Indian Consular Application Cen-

tres (ICACs) run by Alhind Global Services across the country.

The additional service began last Sunday under the guidance of the Indian embassy in Abu Dhabi and the Indian consulate in Dubai. It comes amid the ICACs by Alhind marking two months of operation.

Trump extends \$100,000...

(Cont. from page - 2) The extension comes as the payment requirement remains tied up in court. A federal judge in Massachusetts struck down the government's guidance for implementing it in June, and the administration has appealed.

The Department of Homeland Security last month also began pursuing a separate and more far-reaching proposal that would impose a roughly \$103,000 fee on all H-1B petitions subject to the annual visa cap. Unlike the earlier initiative, it would apply to almost anyone getting a new visa, not just those who are outside the

country. The White House said that registrations from the largest information technology staffing and outsourcing firms have fallen 92pc since the H-1B payment requirement and a new weighted selection system took effect, while more applications are now for workers with advanced degrees and higher-paying job offers.

But critics say some of the planned changes could hurt US-driven innovation by severely impairing the coveted visa programme. More than 700 petitions have included the \$100,000 payment, according to Trump's Friday proclamation.

Domestic Air traffic zooms...

(Cont. from page - 2) traffic registered a six per cent contraction compared with August 2025, when airlines carried 1.29 crore flyers.

According to industry experts, the year-on-year dip reflects a broader trend of calibrated capacity deployment by major carriers, coupled with supply chain disruptions and engine groundings that have clipped overall fleet availability across the sector. While the monsoon season traditionally marks a lean period for Indian air travel, the modest sequential growth from July indicates baseline resilience in demand, particularly across key metro-to-metro corridors.

According to the data from the previous months, low-cost carrier IndiGo and the consolidated Air



India Group continue to command over 90pc of the domestic market share combined, further consolidating their duopoly as smaller carriers battle fleet and operational headwinds. Airline passenger load factors across major carriers have been hovering at moderate levels, reflecting disciplined seat capacity management rather than aggressive fare discounting to artificially stimulate volume. Aviation an-

alysts note that while the August numbers show a year-on-year decline, the sequential improvement is an encouraging prelude to the upcoming festive season starting in late Sept. With Navratri, Dussehra and Diwali driving peak domestic travel, passenger volumes are expected to cross previous monthly benchmarks before the end of the year, provided fleet availability improves and jet fuel costs stabilise.