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Domestic airfares likely to rise as govt lifts fare cap

NEW DELHI: Domestic airfares are set to rise as the Civil Aviation Ministry has lifted the temporary fare cap that was introduced in early Dec. The decision took effect from Monday, March 23.

This move is aimed at offsetting the losses suf-

fered by airlines due to the circuitous routes taken by international flights amid the ongoing conflict between the US, Israel and Iran. Airlines had recently announced fare increases to offset the rising cost of aviation turbine fuel caused by the crisis.

The order stated: "The prevailing situation has since stabilised, with restoration of capacity and normalisation of operations across the sector." It also instructed airlines not to impose "excessive or unjustified surges in fares during periods of peak

demand or disruptions." It warned that fare caps or other interventions could be reintroduced in the public interest if necessary.

Following the IndiGo crisis from Dec 1 to 9, which resulted in massive cancellations and

subsequent fare exploitation by airlines and travel platforms, the ministry had invoked its regulatory powers on Dec 6, 2025, and fixed a fare cap. It had warned of strict action against violations and stated that the caps would (**Cont. on page - 2**)

Airlines sore over 60pc free seats rules

NEW DELHI: Air India, IndiGo and SpiceJet have raised strong concerns to the government's directive mandating free seat selection for at least 60pc of seats on flights, warning that the decision could push up ticket prices.

The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), which represents the three carriers, has appealed to the civil aviation ministry to

withdraw the decision. In a communication to secretary Samir Kumar Sinha, the industry body warned that the directive could have unintended consequences for the aviation sector.

According to FIA, the financial impact of the move would be "significant," forcing airlines to compensate for lost revenue by increasing fares. "As a result,

all passengers, including those who may not wish to preselect seats, will end up paying higher fares," the body stated.

Airlines argue that seat selection fees are a key part of their ancillary revenue, especially in a high-cost operating environment. Rising expenses such as fuel, maintenance and airport charges have already put pressure on

margins, making such income streams crucial for financial sustainability. The FIA also stated that restricting ancillary revenue could weaken market-driven pricing and limit airlines' flexibility. It also cautioned

that the decision may end up hurting affordability, particularly for price-sensitive travellers, as cost get passed on through higher base fares.

The industry body further (**Cont. on page - 2**)

Global economy under threat, warns International Energy Chief

SYDNEY: The global economy is under "major threat" from the energy crisis caused by the Mid-East war and "no country will be immune" to its effects, International Energy Agency chief Fatih Birol said.

Speaking at the National Press Club in Australia's capital, Birol compared the current energy crisis with those of the 1970s and the impact of Russia's 2022 in-

vasion of Ukraine. "This crisis as things stand is now two oil crises and one gas crash put all together," Bi-



International Energy Agency chief Fatih Birol

rol said.

"The global economy is facing a major, major threat today, and I very much hope that this issue will be resolved as soon as possible." No country will be immune to the effects of this crisis if it continues to (**Cont. on page - 2**)

US says cap hit for 33,000 work visas for temporary foreign workers

WASHINGTON: US Citizenship and Immigration Services has announced that it has received enough petitions to meet the H-2B statutory cap for the second-half of fiscal year 2026. However, the filing dates for the second and third allocations for the supplemental H-2B visas for FY 2026 are now available.

In the announcement,

USCIS stated that enough petitions to meet the congressionally established H-2B cap for the second-half of FY 2026 have been received. The cap of 33,000 H-2 B visas for the first-half of FY 2026 was reached on Sept 12, 2025. March 10, 2026, was the final receipt date for new cap-subject H-2B worker petitions requesting an employment start

date on or after April 1 and before Oct. 1, 2026. USCIS will reject new cap-subject H-2B petitions received after March 10, 2026, that request an employment start date on or after April 1 and before Oct. 1, 2026.

Currently, Congress has set the H-2B cap at 66,000 per fiscal year, with 33,000 for workers who begin employment in the first- (**Cont. on page - 2**)

Global airlines in jittery, hike fares

LONDON/WASHINGTON: Global airlines sounded the alarm over soaring jet fuel prices triggered by the US-Israel entity war against Iran, warning of hundreds of millions of extra costs, higher fares and cuts to some routes.

Delta Air Lines Chief Executive Ed Bastian said the dramatic run-up in jet fuel prices had increased the airline's costs by as much as \$400 million in March alone. The industry is moving quickly to pass on (**Cont. on page - 2**)

Gold prices fall further in Dubai

DUBAI: Gold prices continued their downward trend on Monday morning, dropping over Dh15 per gram as the precious metal slipped below \$4,400 per ounce globally.

The 24K gold price was trading at Dh526.25 per gram on Monday morning, down from Dh541.5 per gram at the close of markets last week – a decline of Dh15.25 per gram.

The 24K gold price dropped Dh103 per gram in the UAE in the first three weeks of March due to the ongoing regional conflict. The early Monday drop took its losses to over Dh118 per gram month-to-date.

The 22K gold price plunged below the key psychological level of Dh500 on Monday, trading at Dh487.25 per gram, down

Dh14.25 per gram. Among other variants of the precious metal, 21K, 18K, and 14K fell to Dh467.25, Dh400.5 and Dh312.5 per gram, respectively.

Spot gold was trading at \$4,356.48 per ounce, down three per cent. Similarly, silver fell to \$66 (Dh242) per ounce, down 2.9pc in early trade. Gold has been trending downward due to the Mid-



Mid East conflict involving the US, Israel, and Iran, which has stoked inflation (Cont. on page - 6)

Time to remit money to India

DUBAI: Soft Asian currencies continue to give UAE expatriates more value for every dirham they send home, with the Indian rupee, Philippine peso and Pakistani rupee all trading near some of their weakest levels in recent years.

The Indian rupee recently touched a new low of 25.25 against the dirham, opening up one of the strongest transfer windows for Indian expats. Exchange houses say many families are splitting their transfers, sending part now and holding the rest in case rates move further.

The Philippine peso has been trading between 16 and 16.36 against the (Cont. on page - 6)

CBSE's assessment scheme for Class 10 students in MidEast

NEW DELHI: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has announced a revised assessment scheme for Class 10 students in MidEast countries after cancelling the remaining main examina-

tions due to the prevailing situation in the region.

In a notification, the board said exams scheduled across countries including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain and Iran

were reviewed before the decision was taken. The board said the results of students in the MidEast will be declared along with those of other candidates. It added that internal assessment marks already uploaded by schools will be factored into the final results, which will be treated as final, with no special examinations to be conducted beyond the provi-

sions outlined. CBSE clarified that examinations conducted between Feb 17 and Feb 28 were completed successfully, covering a total of six academic subjects including Mathematics, English and Science, along with 16 languages and 22 skill subjects and results will now be prepared based on students' performance (Cont. on page - 6)

Global airlines in jittery, hike fares

(Cont. from page - 1) higher expenses through fare hikes, he told a J P Morgan industrials conference.

American Airlines said it expects a \$400 million increase in first-quarter expenses due to fuel costs. Among the first to act, Scandinavia's biggest airline SAS AB said it is cutting a limited number of flights because of the "sharp and sudden increase" in fuel prices. "The entire European aviation system is now feeling the pressure from a sudden fuel shock," it said in an email. The war,

now in its third week, has thrown global aviation into turmoil, with flights cancelled, rescheduled or rerouted as most MidEast airspace remains closed amid fears of missile and drone attacks. Jet fuel prices have emerged as a major challenge, pushing up operating costs, with European prices doubling and Asian prices up almost 80pc since the start of US and Zionist strikes on Iran in late Feb. Fuel is the industry's second-largest expense after labour, typically accounting for a fifth to a quarter of operating costs.

US airlines largely stopped hedging fuel in the past two decades, and SAS said last year it had not hedged any of its fuel consumption for the following 12 months.

Airlines sore over 60pc...

(Cont. from page - 1) highlighted that broader challenges, including rising aviation turbine fuel prices and operational disruptions linked to geopolitical tensions in West Asia. The airline grouping has also slammed the absence of stakeholder consultation before the announcement. It also warned that such regulatory intervention could set a precedent for increased control over airline pricing structures. "If applied, this measure will set a precedent for extensive intervention in ancillary pricing...creating uncertainty for airlines regarding future regulatory constraints," FIA stated, urging the government to reconsider the directive.

Domestic airfares likely...

(Cont. from page - 1) remain in force until the situation stabilised.

At the time, the rate chart fixed the maximum permissible limits as follows: Rs 7,500 for distances up to 500 km; Rs 12,000 for 500-1,000 km; Rs 15,000 for 1,000-1,500 km and Rs 18,000 for distances above 1,500 km. The

latest order also comes against the backdrop of the Federation of India Airlines—representing three major carriers—calling for a rollback of a recent ministry directive mandating that airlines cannot charge for seat selection on 60pc of seats. The body had warned that this cap could lead to a surge in airfares.

Global economy under...

(Cont. from page - 1) go in this direction. So there is a need for global efforts. "President Donald Trump and Tehran have issued tit-for-tat threats as the war entered its fourth week, with the US president demanding the Islamic republic reopen the blocked Strait of Hormuz, 20pc of the world's oil and gas shipments transit.

The bottleneck has nearly halted all petroleum shipments through the narrow waterway.

Oil prices rose again early Monday, with US benchmark crude briefly touching the \$100-per-barrel mark. Birol told Australian media that at least 40 energy assets had been "severely or very severely" damaged in the MidEast due to the war.

US says cap hit for 33,000 work visas for temporary...

(Cont. from page - 1) half of the fiscal year (Oct. 1 – March 31) and 33,000 for workers who begin employment in the second-half of the fiscal year (April 1 – Sep. 30). Beyond the 66,000 visa cap, there are additional or supplementary visas. On Jan 30, the Department of Homeland Security, through US

Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Department of Labour, announced a temporary final rule making available an additional 64,716 H-2B temporary non-agricultural worker visas for fiscal year 2026, on top of the statutory cap of 66,000 H-2B visas that are available each fiscal year.

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War in West Asia worrisome: Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Lok Sabha on Monday delivering a comprehensive statement on the escalating conflict in West Asia and its multifaceted impact on India.

The prime minister's address serves as a definitive outline of India's position on the evolving situation, detailing the government's diplomatic engagements, deep-seated concerns over regional stability and the tangible threats posed to global energy security and trade routes. "From the very beginning, we have expressed deep concern about this conflict," he stated. This formal address follows a critical high-level meeting chaired by the prime minister on Sunday, during which he reviewed the nation's preparedness across the petroleum, crude oil, natural gas, power and fertiliser sectors.

With maritime corridors facing unprecedented disruptions and the safety of Indian nationals becoming a central concern, the



Modi addressed Lok Sabha on the war situation.

prime minister emphasised that India must act with both sensitivity and strategic vigilance. He noted that the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has been actively assessing the short, medium, and long-term implications for the Indian economy, ensuring that the country remains resilient against external shocks.

Opening his remarks, Modi acknowledged the severity of the current geopolitical climate, noting that the window for a quick

resolution is narrowing as the violence persists. "Today I am here to talk about the ongoing conflict in West Asia. West Asia is going through a difficult time," the Prime Minister stated. He informed the House that the executive branch has remained transparent, noting that "Shri Hardeep Puri and Shri S Jaishankar have informed the Houses on this matter."

Prime Minister Modi highlighted the region's role as a transit hub, noting that "the region where this

war is taking place is also an important route for our trade with other countries of the world." He specifically drew attention to India's energy dependence, stating, "In particular, a large part of our needs for crude oil and gas is met by this very region." He emphasised that the stakes are high because "this region is also important because around 1 crore Indians live and work there." Modi expressed grave concern over the duration of the hostilities, observing that "the situation and the escalation have now passed three weeks, creating adverse effects on the global economy and livelihoods." He further elaborated on this sentiment by adding, "The situation in West Asia at this time is concerning."

FOREX RATES
As on 23rd March 2026 (In rupees)

| Currency | Bill Buy | Bill Sell |
|---------------------|----------|-----------|
| US Dollar | 93.26 | 94.47 |
| British Pound | 124.19 | 125.99 |
| Euro | 107.35 | 109.63 |
| Japanese Yen | 58.53 | 59.46 |
| Swiss Franc (CHF) | 117.69 | 120.3 |
| Canadian Dollar | 67.69 | 69.23 |
| Australian Dollar | 64.92 | 66.35 |
| Norwegian Krone | 9.61 | 9.91 |
| Swedish Krona | 9.85 | 10.13 |
| New Zealand Dollar | 53.93 | 55.11 |
| Hong Kong Dollar | 11.75 | 12.11 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 312.5643 | 293.4029 |
| Singapore Dollar | 72.38 | 74.02 |
| Saudi Arabian Riyal | 24.52 | 25.29 |
| U A E Dirham | 25.12 | 25.84 |

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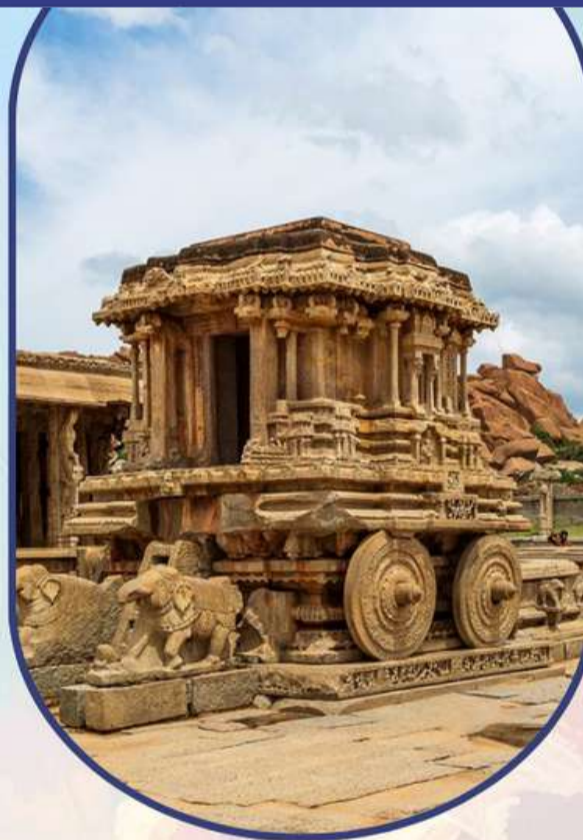
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GULF FAQs

Shared housing contracts in Dubai should be officially registered now

Can you please explain the new rule on shared housing contracts in Dubai?

Tenancy contracts in shared accommodation will need to be officially recorded in a government registry under Dubai's new housing law, lawyers have said. The law regulating shared housing in the emirate was recently issued by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al

Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

The legislation introduces a Shared Accommodation Register, where tenancy contracts, management agreements and details of residents living in shared housing units will be recorded. Lawyers say this step will help protect residents living in shared flats by ensuring their tenancy

arrangements are formally documented. Dr Hasan Elhais, legal consultant at Amal Al Rashedi Lawyers and Legal Consultants, said registering tenancy contracts creates an important layer of legal protection. "When tenancy arrangements are recorded in an official registry, it becomes easier to verify the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords,

and also resolve disputes if they arise," Elhais said.

Dubai's new law also introduces rules for managing shared housing units across the emirate. Property owners or operators must obtain a permit before designating a residential unit for shared accommodation. The permit will be valid for one year and can be renewed. Authorities will also be able to in-

spect shared housing units to ensure they meet safety, health and occupancy requirements.

Violations may result in fines ranging from Dh500 to Dh500,000, which could double in cases of repeated offences. Authorities may also suspend activities, revoke permits or cancel licences of establishments that fail to comply. The law applies to residential units across Dubai, including those in private developments and free zones. However, it does not apply to accommodation designated for labour housing.

My husband abandoned me? What are my rights?

My husband and I got married in Dubai a few years ago. We've been experiencing some differences, and recently, he packed his bags and left our home, abandoning me and the children. What are my legal rights in this situation? He has not sent a divorce notice yet, but if he does, I am prepared to challenge it in court. What are my rights in this scenario? Is he still obligated to pay rent and other household expenses, given that he chose to leave?

It is assumed that you are a non-Muslim resident of Dubai and you are married to a non-Muslim male; therefore, the provisions of the UAE Personal Status Law for Non-Muslims are applicable. A non-Muslim individual who is a UAE resident may file for a divorce as per the provisions of the enacted UAE Personal Status Law for Non-Muslims or may also apply his or her respective family law under which he or she is married. This is in accordance with Article 1 (1) of the Federal Decree-Law No. 41 of 2022 on Civil Personal Status, which states: "The provisions of present Decree-Law shall apply

to non-Muslim citizens of the UAE and to non-Muslim foreigners who reside in the state unless one of them invokes the application of their respective law, in relation to matters of marriage, divorce, estate, will and proof of affiliation, without prejudice to Articles 12, 13, 15, 16 and 17 of the referenced Federal Law No. 5 of 1985."

The provisions of the UAE Personal Status Law for Non-Muslims allow an individual to obtain a divorce in the first hearing of the court itself. This is in accordance with Article-3 of the UAE Personal Status Law for Non-Muslims, which states: "Divorce cases that are filed in accordance with the provisions of this Decree-Law shall not be referred to the family guidance committees and shall be referred directly to the court to issue a judgment at the first hearing."

Moreover, an individual may also seek a unilateral divorce in the respec-

tive Personal Status Court in Dubai without providing any justification or reason for divorce.

This is in accordance with Article-7 of the UAE Personal Status Law for Non-Muslims, which states: "Unilateral divorce may be requested and

.However, once a unilateral divorce is granted by the respective Personal Status Court in Dubai, a divorced woman may claim alimony from her ex-husband.

This is in accordance with Article-9 of the UAE Personal Status Law for Non-Muslims, which states: "The divorcee, after issuance of divorce order, apply to the court to obtain an alimony judgment from her ex-husband. Any applications subsequent to divorce shall be added in the court using the form prepared to this effect. In the event that the conditions or controls of this alimony or other financial requests are not agreed upon in the marriage contract, the ac-

ceptance of the application and its duration shall be subject to the discretionary power of the judge after evaluating the following factors..."The judge based on the alimony case filed by a woman against her

ex-husband, may grant certain amount of alimony to such woman based on various factors including but not limited to duration of the marriage, age of wife, financial condition of each spouse, negligence or any act due to which divorce has been obtained by the husband or wife, compensation by a spouse for any material or moral damage caused due to divorce, financial damages sustained due to unilateral divorce, payments related to custody and maintenance of children. This is in accordance with sub clauses-1 to 9 of Article-9 of the UAE Personal Status Law for Non-Muslims.

Based on the aforementioned provisions of law, either of you may file for divorce in the Personal Status Court of Dubai and may obtain a divorce under the applicable provisions of the Personal Status Law for Non-Muslims. Furthermore, you may claim alimony from your husband. Your husband is obliged to provide maintenance for you until he remains married to you. However, he should provide child support to the children during the marriage and post-divorce.



ted if either spouse expresses in court his/her desire to separate and terminate the marriage, without any need to justify their reason or to demonstrate harm or to put the blame on the other party

granted if either spouse expresses in court his/her desire to separate and terminate the marriage, without any need to justify their reason or to demonstrate harm or to put the blame on the other party

ceptance of the application and its duration shall be subject to the discretionary power of the judge after evaluating the following factors..."The judge based on the alimony case filed by a woman against her

India, China bear brunt of Trump's tougher visa policies: report

WASHINGTON: India and China bore the maximum brunt of tougher immigration policy unveiled by the Trump administration which issued 2.5 lakh fewer visas in the first eight months of 2025 compared with the same period in 2024.

From Jan to Aug 2025, the State Department approved 11pc fewer permanent resident and tempo-

rary visas compared with the same period a year before. These visas are generally issued for students, workers and family members of citizens and legal residents. The 11pc drop doesn't include tourist visas, which also fell during the same period, the Washington Post re-

ported. According to the report, visas for Chinese and Indian nationals fell by about 84,000 compared with the same period in 2024, largely reflecting a drop-off in international students and workers from those countries.

Business and tourism visas declined by about 3.4pc in the first eight months of 2025 compared with that period a year earlier, a drop of nearly

two lakh visas.

Between Jan and Aug 2024, the US had issued more than 3.44 lakh student visas, the number declined to a little over 2.38 lakh during the same period in 2025. The family preference visa, which includes adult children and siblings of US citizens fell by more than 27pc or by over 44,000.

The visas issued to sea and airline workers also

reduced by 30,876, while those issued for culture exchange visitors declined by 29,594. The visas issued to fiancé /spouse declined from 37,229 in the first eight months of 2024 to 18,894 for the period under review in 2025.

White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said in a statement that "President Trump was elected with a resounding mandate to put American citizens first and every policy decision he's made has reflected that priority."

Rupee slides to 94-mark against dollar

MUMBAI: The intensifying West Asian war, with the US-Israel alliance pounding Iran and the latter retaliating with drone/missile strikes, is having a telling effect on the rupee, which is fast depreciating towards the 94 to the US dollar mark.

Soaring energy prices, re-routing of trade routes and FPIs pulling out of the domestic equity markets are weakening the rupee.

Opening about 14 paise weaker at 93.8475, the Indian currency has tested a high/low of 93.81/93.95 per dollar in intraday trades so far.

Amit Pabari, MD, CR Forex Advisors, said: "As uncertainty rises, the US dollar has strengthened.

This is not just because of its safe-haven status, but also because the US is a net energy exporter, unlike most of Asia and Europe. In an environment of rising oil prices, this gives the dollar a clear advantage.

"For the rupee, this creates a double impact. Higher oil prices increase India's demand for dollars, while a stronger global dollar makes it more expensive to access. As a result, the war brings nothing but pressure for the rupee in the near term."

Pabari noted that the rupee is now approaching an important level — the 94-mark is expected to act as a strong resistance, given its psychological significance.

Arabian Travel Market 2026 postponed to August

DUBAI: The 2026 edition of Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2026, originally scheduled to take place from May 4-7 at Dubai World Trade Centre, will now take place from August 17-20, 2026, with the venue remaining unchanged.

The decision to reschedule the event has been made to prioritise the safety and well-being of customers, partners and colleagues and to give the global travel and tourism community greater confidence and flexibility to attend.

Now in its 33rd edition, Arabian Travel Market serves as a key global platform connecting destinations, travel suppliers, hospitality brands, airlines, technology providers and industry professionals from across the travel ecosystem.

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME, Arabian Travel Market, said: "Arabian Travel Market has long served as a vital platform for bringing the global travel and tourism community together in Dubai, enabling destinations, suppliers and industry leaders to connect, collaborate and shape the future of the sector.

"The safety and well-being of our customers, partners, and colleagues remains our highest priority and the decision to reschedule ATM 2026 to August reflects our com-

mitment to ensuring that everyone can participate at this important industry gathering. We look forward to welcoming the international travel community back to Dubai later this year."

Time to remit...

(Cont. from page - 2)

dirham. The move reflects a combination of global pressures that have pushed the peso weaker against major currencies, particularly the US dollar, which indirectly influences the dirham because of its dollar peg.

For now, favourable rates are prompting households to reassess strategy, deciding whether to lock in current levels or wait for another shift in the market.

CBSE's assessment scheme for Class 10 students in MidEast

(Cont. from page - 2) mance in the papers they have already appeared for. Accordingly, the results shall be prepared based on the following Assessment Scheme: Students appeared in all examinations: The results of such students will be declared based on their performance in the examinations.

Students appeared for four examinations:

The results of such students will be declared based on the average of the marks obtained in

the best three performing subjects for the subjects whose examinations have not been conducted.

Students appeared for three examinations: The results of such students will be declared based on the average of the marks obtained in the best two performing subjects for the subjects whose examinations have not been conducted.

Students appeared for two examinations: There are very few students who have appeared in the examinations in only

two subjects. Their results will be declared based on the average of the marks of the two subjects in the remaining subjects.

The result of the students who have appeared in the examinations in only one or two subjects in previous years will be declared based on their performance in the examinations conducted.

For the subjects whose examinations have not been conducted, they will be given an opportunity to appear in the Second Board Examination.

Gold prices fall further..

(Cont. from page - 2) fears.

Ole Hansen, head of commodity strategy at Saxo Bank, said the war's impact on energy markets has lifted inflation expectations at a time when central banks were already cautious about easing. "The surge in oil and refined

product prices — particularly diesel — has reduced the likelihood of near-term rate cuts and, in some cases, pushed market pricing toward a "higher-for-longer" rate outlook. This has supported real yields, a key headwind for non-yielding assets such as gold," said Hansen.