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In two years, 117 tourism projects approved

NEW DELHI: The tourism ministry has sanctioned 117 projects worth Rs 5,756 crore to develop tourism infrastructure over the last two years.

"The Ministry of Tourism has undertaken several initiatives during the last two years to promote tourism through infrastructure development, digital pro-

motion and expansion of basic amenities across the country," Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

The ministry provides central financial assistance to state governments and Union Territory administrations for developing

tourism infrastructure and augmenting basic amenities under the schemes: Swadesh Darshan 2.0, Challenge Based Destination Development, Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD), Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Devel-

opment and Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DA JUGA), subject to scheme guidelines and fund availability.

Further, under the government of India initiative, special assistance to states for capital investment, development of iconic tourist centres to Global Scale, financial assistance was

provided to states during 2024-25 for tourism projects.

"In the last two years, the ministry has sanctioned 117 projects worth Rs. 5756.62 crore under the afore-mentioned Schemes," Shekhawat said. The ministry promotes tourism through the (Cont. on page - 2)

Air India suspends Delhi-Tel Aviv flights till September-end

NEW DELHI: Air India has extended the suspension of its Tel Aviv-Delhi flights until the end of Sept, citing continued security concerns amid escalating tensions across West Asia. The decision comes as renewed hostilities in the region have prompted sever-

al international airlines to adopt a cautious approach to operations.

The airline has been repeatedly extending the suspension of services on the route over the past several months due to the volatile security situation. Confirming the latest ex-

tension, a senior Air India executive heading the airline's Israel operations said that the flights have been further suspended "till Sept end due to security concerns."

The latest move follows heightened tensions over the past 10 days, with the US and Iran escalating military activity. American forces targeted bridges, water desalination plants and electrical facilities in Iran, while Tehran responded by striking US bases in allied countries across West Asia.

As security risks persist, several leading international carriers have opted for a "wait and watch" approach. Apart from Israel- (Cont. on page - 2)

Aviation fuel prices surge 17.6pc post-war escalation

LONDON: With the resumption of the conflict between the US and Iran and the continued blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, jet fuel prices also surged in the past week, according to the Jet Fuel Price Monitor. This is in line with the increase in global crude prices. The global average aviation fuel price last week (ending July 17) rose 17.6pc compared with the week before to \$149.40/bbl.

Brent futures rose \$1.79 or two per cent to settle at \$91.01 a barrel, which was the highest close for Brent since June 10. The largest changes in aviation fuel prices were seen in Asia and Oceania (20.7pc), the Middle East (20.9pc), Europe and CIS (16.5pc), North America (16.6pc) and Africa (16.8pc).

On a year-to-year basis, jet fuel prices have surged by 65.9pc since 2025. At the end of the week end-

ing June 19, the jet fuel prices were \$119.17 per barrel, 116.63 at the week ending June 26, \$119.13 at the week ending July 3 and \$127.06 at the week ending July 10. It may be noted that the MidEastern carriers saw a 28.8pc (Cont. on page - 2)

UAE Visa-on-Arrival: eligibility expanded for qualified Indian passport holders

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has simplified travel for eligible Indian passport holders by

offering a Visa-on-Arrival facility.

To qualify, travellers must hold an ordinary Indian passport valid for at least six months and possess a valid visa, residence permit or Green Card issued by the US, UK, any European Union (EU) member state, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand or



Modi to flag-off Andhra's Bhogapuram airport on Aug 1

VIJAYAWADA: Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu said that the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram will emerge as the jewel of North Andhra.

Reviewing arrangements with senior officials for the inauguration of the airport by Prime Minister Modi

on Aug 1, the chief minister directed that the event be conducted on a grand scale.

The chief minister instructed officials to accord a traditional welcome to the prime minister, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of North Andhra region.

Officials informed Naidu that along with the inauguration of the passenger terminal building, Modi will also formally inaugurate the GMR Skill Development Centre, the Aviation Hub-University and the GMR-MANSAS Edu City. Describing the airport as a landmark project for North Andhra, the chief minister said it would serve as a logistics hub, provide global connectivity and become a game changer for Andhra's economic growth.

Naidu directed officials to honour the farmers and landowners who contributed land for the mega international airport.

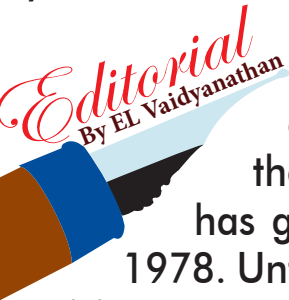




Setback for Indians

Donald Trump’s eccentricities have no limit. He will say one thing today and exactly the opposite the next day. The on-going Iran-US war itself is an excellent example of Trump’s quirks.

The latest example of Trump’s strange behavior is the announcement of sweeping changes to the US student visa system, ending a decades-old policy that allowed international students to remain in the country for the duration of their academic programme. Under the new rules, most foreign students will get a maximum four-year stay unless they receive permission from the US government to extend it. The changes, which take effect in September, are being pitched by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as a national security and immigration reform measure. Nevertheless, universities, education groups and international students say the policy could create uncertainty, particularly for research scholars and doctoral candidates.



What has the Trump administration changed? The key change is the end of the “Duration of Status” (D/S) system that has governed student visas in the US since 1978. Until now, students on F-1 visas, exchange visitors on J-1 visas and foreign media representatives on I visas could remain in the US for as long as they maintained their visa status and continued pursuing their approved academic programme. Under the new regulation, international students will instead receive a fixed period of admission, with most of them allowed to stay only for the duration of their academic programme, subject to a maximum of four years. Students who need additional time will have to seek formal approval from the US government.

Over three lakh Indian students studying in the US on F-1 visa are set to be affected by the new regulation, which mandates that they transition to the new system “automatically” and have their “authorised stay capped at a maximum of four years”. Experts point out that there is still a lack of clarity and processes will emerge clearer once the rules become applicable in mid-Sept. However, they say that the new rule may complicate matters for existing students. This rule fundamentally changes how international students maintain lawful status in the US, says Bangalore-based Sukanya Raman, US immigration expert at the law firm Immigration Desk.

The Trump administration says the previous system was vulnerable to misuse. According to the Department of Homeland Security, some foreign nationals repeatedly enrolled in academic programmes to maintain legal status in the US without leaving the country. Announcing the rule, DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin said the old framework had become outdated. The new rule brings several major changes to the US student visa system. Universities will no longer be able to effectively extend a student’s stay under the earlier Duration of Status framework.

The post-graduation grace period has been reduced from 60 days to 30 days, while stricter rules have also been introduced for programme changes and transfers between institutions, shifting greater oversight to the federal government.

Indian students are among the biggest beneficiaries of the US higher education system. Over three lakh Indian students studied in the US during the 2023-24 academic year and Indians account for nearly 30pc of all international students in the country. The Modi govt should intervene and save the future of our students.

Remittances to India hit record \$145bn in FY26

NEW DELHI: Remittances from Indians working abroad — a large share of them in West Asia — climbed to a record \$144.8 billion in 2025-26, up from \$124.6 billion in the previous fiscal, the government told the Lok Sabha, pushing back against concerns that regional conflict would dent inflows.

Responding to an unstarred question from Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy on the impact of West Asia conflicts on remittance flows, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary cited RBI balance of payments data showing net private transfers — mainly remittances by Indians employed overseas — have continued an unbroken upward run despite years of regional instability.

The momentum has carried into the current fiscal year as well. Net trans-

fers rose from \$9.4 billion in April 2025 to \$16 billion in April 2026, a jump of roughly 70pc for the month, according to the government’s reply. Remittances have more than doubled since 2013-14 and have grown particularly sharply over the last four years — rising from \$81.2 billion in 2021-22 to \$144.8 billion in 2025-

26, a period that coincides with escalating conflict in the West Asia region.

On why inflows have proved resilient even as the region has seen sustained conflict, the ministry pointed to the World Bank’s Global Economic Prospects report of Jan 2015, which found that remittance flows tend to be

(Cont. on page - 6)

Kashi Vishwanath Corridor unlocks tourism boom

VARANASI: Ever since the redevelopment project was inaugurated in Dec 2021, the Kashi Vishwanath Dham Corridor in Varanasi has become the engine of the city’s economic growth. Its real estate, local handicrafts and sari industry, hotels, restaurants and eateries have benefited from the substantial increase in tourists visiting the Kashi Vishwanath Tem-

ple. But lack of awareness about the tourism potential of the rest of the Purvanchal region or eastern UP, has meant that the state has failed to leverage the attraction of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple for the welfare of the rest of the region.

A panel discussion titled “Tourism in Purvanchal: Scope and Facilities” took up these issues at the Business Standard Ubharta Purvanchal conclave, held in Varanasi. According to Vishwa Bhushan, CEO of the Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust, from Dec 13, 2021, when Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the redeveloped corridor, to June 29, 2026, more than 325 million people had

(Cont. on page - 6)

Aviation fuel prices...

(Cont. from page - 1)
year-on-year decrease in demand. Capacity fell 24.3pc year-on-year and the load factor was 76.1pc (-4.8 compared with May 2025). The impacts of the Iran war continue to cause a highly negative year-on-year traffic comparison, but month-to-month, the impact is lessening and the rate of decline was almost half that of April.

According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), as stated in June: “War-related disruptions in the MidEast and rising fuel costs have shifted the outlook for airlines to the worse. Globally, airlines are expected

to see profitability halve compared with 2025. Profits will shrink from \$45 billion in 2025 to \$23 billion this year. And margins will shrink from 4.2pc to two per cent. All airline bottom lines are suffering from the rapid 70pc rise in jet fuel prices.

Air India suspends...

(Cont. from page - 1)
li airlines — El Al, IsraAir, Arkia and Air Haifa — only a limited number of foreign carriers are currently operating flights to and from Israel.

The reduced flight availability has created significant challenges for travellers seeking to leave Israel

for work, family commitments or vacations.

Air India initially suspended its Tel Aviv-Delhi operations in April, weeks after the Iran-US conflict began in late Feb. The suspension, first announced until the end of May, was subsequently extended through July and has now been prolonged until the end of Sept.

The continued suspension has also added to the concerns of more than 40,000 Indians living in Israel, many of whom rely on the route for personal and professional travel or to return to India amid the ongoing regional uncertainty.

In two years, 117 tourism...

(Cont. from page - 1)
Incredible India Digital Platform, comprising the website and mobile application, which serves as a one-stop digital interface for domestic and international travellers. The revamped portal, launched in Sept 2024, is available

in multiple languages and offers curated travel content, essential information and seamless booking of flights, hotels, cabs, buses and ASI monument tickets through partnerships with Online Travel Agents (OTAs) and other stakeholders.

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Indian exporters may get \$7bn US tariff refunds

NEW DELHI: Indian exporters whose goods were subject to reciprocal and penal tariffs in the US market for about 10 months since April, 2025 may recoup as much as \$7-8 billion. The US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has started settling the claims regarding these levies which the US Supreme Court invalidated, a senior industry official said.

The total incidence of these extra tariffs over MFN rates on Indian goods is estimated to be around \$12 billion, but over a third of that amount may not be recoverable. Importers of Indian goods or intermediaries actually paid these

levies. Recovery will be easier in cases where Indian exporters have related-party outfits in the US.

The refunds will be issued only to importers on record and authorised customs brokers with a US bank account. Any gain from the refund process for Indian exporters would depend on how they structured their transactions when the US increased additional tariffs on India between April and August last year. The tariff started from 10pc in April to 50pc by August, said Ajay Sahai, CEO and Director General of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO).

Some listed companies importing into the US through their local subsidiaries have already announced the scale of refunds received in regulatory filings. Elgi Equipment, for instance, has announced that it has received Rs 25.6 crore, ADF Foods got back Rs 19.97 crore and Jash Engineering received Rs 4.5 crore. The US has accepted Camlin Fine Sciences' refund claim of Rs 9 crore. There have been other cases where claims have been accepted or refunds released, but these have not been disclosed as the exporting companies are not listed, said Pankaj Chadha.

NRIs are looking beyond property in UAE

DUBAI: Global equities, private markets, fixed income and selected digital assets are drawing greater interest from NRIs who have traditionally held much of their wealth in property and operating businesses.

Younger generations of Indian families in the Gulf are seeking liquid investments that can be managed across countries and currencies.

"NRI clients are expanding beyond traditional real estate and increasing their allocation to financial assets. We are seeing growing interest in global equities, private equity, venture capital, structured solutions and private credit as clients build more diversified portfolios," said Kunal Sumaya, Market Head for Global NRI and Ad Interim Country Head for India at Julius Baer.

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GULF FAQs

Can I claim compensation if surgery/treatment fails?

I underwent a medical procedure in Dubai that did not produce the expected results. Apart from explaining that the success of the treatment could not be guaranteed, the doctor has done little to address my concerns or reassure me. Could this amount to medical liability and what options are available to me?

Pursuant to your query, the provisions of the UAE medical liability laws are applicable. In the UAE, a medical practitioner is required to provide treatment in accordance with the recognised standards of the medical profession and exercise the requisite degree of care and diligence expected of a reasonably competent practitioner.

Article-6 of the Federal Decree-Law No. (4) of 2016 Concerning Medical Liability (UAE Medical Liability Law) sets out the circumstances in which a medical practitioner may be held liable for medical error:

"A medical error is an error committed by the practitioner of the profession for any of the following reasons: 1. His ignorance of the technical issues that every practitioner of the profession of the same degree and specialisation is supposed to be aware of.

2. Failure to follow the recognised professional and medical standards.

3. Failure to act with necessary due diligence

4. Negligence and failure to act carefully and with precaution.

The executive regulations of this Decree-Law shall set the standards of gross medical errors."

Accordingly, medical liability arises only where a medical error has been established. The mere fact that a treatment or surgical procedure did not produce the desired or expected results may not, by itself, be sufficient to establish

medical error. In addition, healthcare providers are required to obtain the patient's informed consent before carrying out any medical procedure. This is in accordance with the Article 8 (c) of the UAE Medical Liability Law which provides:

"The patient's written consent must be obtained if the patient is fully competent or from the spouse or any relative to the fourth degree if the patient lacks competency or if his consent could not be obtained for carrying out the surgical procedure or any other necessary surgery and after keeping the patient aware of the potential effects and medical complications resulting from the surgery. Whoever reaches the age of eighteen shall be competent to issue the consent unless he lacks legal capacity."

An informed consent requires that a patient is adequately informed of the nature of the proposed treatment, its expected benefits, potential risks and complications, available alternatives and the possibility that the intended outcome may not be achieved. Where these matters have been properly explained and informed consent has been obtained, the treating doctor may not generally be held liable merely because the treatment fails to achieve the desired result.

However, where a patient believes that the treating doctor failed to exercise the required standard of care, did not adequately explain the material risks or available alternatives,

failed to obtain proper informed consent or otherwise acted negligently, the patient may lodge a complaint with the competent health authority, such as the Dubai Health Authority (DHA), the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi (DoH) or the Ministry of Health and Prevention (MOHAP) depending on the emirate in which the treatment was provided.

Such complaints are generally referred to a specialised Medical Liability Committee, which examines

tions shall set the way such committee is formed and the rules and procedures of its work. Such committees shall be exclusively in charge of settling the complaints referred thereto by the health authority, the Public Prosecution or by the court and shall decide whether or not a medical error has been committed and seriousness of such error. In case of several liabilities, the committee shall decide the percentage of every person who contributed in such error

ical Liability Committee) shall be composed at each health authority, by virtue of a resolution by the minister or the head of the health authority, as the case may be. Members of such shall include doctors specialising in the specialisations named by the health authority. The resolution issued in this regard shall name the committee's chairman, deputy chairman, members and a rapporteur (a rapporteur is an official appointed by an organization - like a government or a legislative committee - to investigate a specific issue). In accordance with the aforementioned provisions of the law, an unsuccessful medical procedure, in itself, may not establish medical liability.

Medical liability arises only where it is established that the treating doctor committed a medical error

by failing to adhere to the recognised standards of medical practice, failed to exercise the requisite degree of care and diligence or failed to obtain the patient's informed consent in accordance with the law.

Accordingly, where a patient has reasonable grounds to believe that the applicable standard of care was not met, the appropriate course of action is to lodge a complaint with the competent health authority for investigation by the Medical Liability Committee. Subject to the committee's findings, the patient may pursue the remedies available under UAE law, including a claim for compensation where the medical error and the resulting damage are established.



the medical records, expert medical evidence, and all relevant circumstances to determine whether a medical error has occurred and whether such error caused the patient's injury.

This is in accordance with the Article 18 of the UAE Medical Liability Law and Article-9 of the Cabinet Resolution No. (40) of 2019 Concerning the Executive Regulations of Federal Decree-Law No. (4) of 2016 Concerning Medical Liability. Article 18: Upon a resolution to be issued by the minister or the health authority, as appropriate, a committee of experienced doctors specialised in all the medical fields shall be created and titled "Medical Liability Committee".

The Executive Regula-

indicating its reasons, resulting damages, the relation between the error and the damage and the percentage of disability in the affected organ, if any. The committee may seek the assistance of experts and of whomever it deems fit to perform its duties.

This committee shall be subject to the provisions of Federal Law No. (7) of 2012 referred to above as far as they do not conflict with the provisions of this Decree-Law. The indemnification claims filed as a result of the medical liability shall not be accepted unless after their referral to the Medical Liability Committees under the provisions of this Decree-Law."

Article 9(1): "A committee to be known as (Med-

Germany strengthens cultural tourism appeal

FRANKFURT: "Culture is an exceptionally strong asset for the Destination Germany brand – both in the major cities and in rural areas," said Petra Hedorfer, CEO of the German National Tourist Board (GNTB), during her keynote address at the fifth GNTB Incoming & Brand Summit held in Frankfurt.

Speaking under the summit theme "Innovative. Authentic. Liveable",

contemporary experiences to meet the changing expectations of international travellers.

"Brand values need to be constantly refined," Hedorfer said, stressing the importance of connecting globally relevant cultural themes with market-specific campaigns and using digital innovations to make Germany's attractions

excited about Germany's cultural proposition," she added.

The summit brought together more than 70 travel and lifestyle journalists from over 25 countries, along with tourism experts and industry partners, to discuss the future direction of the Destination Germany brand and the role of innovation, authenticity and quality of life in attracting global visitors.

Hedorfer said Germany's strong competitive position in international tourism is a result of the GNTB's continuous adaptation to changing customer demands, international market conditions and the opportunities created by digital transformation. "Today, Germany is one of the 10 most popular travel destinations worldwide and, for more than a decade, has been firmly established among Europeans as the top destination for cultural travel," she said.



Hedorfer highlighted how Germany is strengthening its global tourism profile by combining cultural heritage, regional traditions, natural landscapes and

more visible and immersive. "Our aim is to inspire regular visitors to return to Germany again and again, while at the same time making new target groups

Kashi Vishwanath Corridor unlocks...

(**Cont. from page - 2**) visited the temple. Dr R P Singh, chairman of UP Pollution Control Board, said that growth must go hand in hand with environment: UPPCB's Ravindra Pratap Singh, UP Additional Chief Secretary (Industrial Development) and Infrastructure and Industrial Development Commissioner Deepak Kumar opined that Purvanchal is emerging as a major investment hub.

The temple trust's CEO,

who is also the author of several books on the city's spiritual significance, furnished details that show the average expenditure of tourists in Varanasi has increased. Tourism sample survey, done by a reputed private agency, revealed that tourists from within the state spent on average Rs 7,000 per person during their Varanasi visit, while those from outside UP spent Rs 8,000 and international tourists Rs

20,000, including on travel, boarding and lodging, purchasing prasad or saris and other handicrafts. He said of the tourists, 75pc comprised domestic tourists from outside the state and of the rest, 23pc were from within UP and two per cent are international tourists. Bhushan said the economic spinoff was an estimated Rs 5.5 trillion annually, while earlier estimates were Rs 1.25 trillion to Rs 1.5 trillion per year.

How to apply for an Indian passport in UAE?

DUBAI: Indian nationals applying for passport, visa, consular and attestation services in the UAE will now need to use a new process after the government of India officially outsourced these services to Alhind Tours & Travels from July 22, 2026 (the matter is in the court now).

The services are now be-

ing delivered through 16 Indian Consular Application Centres (ICACs) across the UAE. Applicants will no longer be able to submit passport and related applications directly at the embassy of India in Abu Dhabi or the Consulate General of India in Dubai.

Appointments can be booked through consul-

arsevainuae.com, with new slots released daily at 9am and 9pm. The new outsourcing arrangement took effect from July 22, following changes to the delivery of Indian consular services in the UAE. Under the new system, passport, visa, consular and attestation services replaced in-person application ser-



Crashed Pan Am plane found after 74 years

PUERTO RICO: Some 74 years after a Pan American Airways flight crashed into the water off the coast of Puerto Rico, an aviation search team said it found the wreckage sitting on the ocean floor.

The Air/Sea Heritage Foundation and others, including Discovery Channel's series "Expedition Unknown," found the wreckage of the Pan Am "Clipper Endeavor" at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean off Puerto Rico's northern coast. The Douglas DC-4 aircraft broke into two sections and came to rest after crashing into the ocean shortly after taking off from Puerto Rico on April 11, 1952, with 64 passengers and five crew members on board.

While everyone on board survived the initial impact, only 12 passengers and five crew members were rescued, with the rest being lost with the plane. The disaster led to sweeping aviation reforms, with the introduction of pre-flight safety briefings and emergency procedure demonstrations. "We are all stunned and elated by this discovery yet also humbled to remember what happened in that place so long ago," said Russ Matthews, president of the Air/Sea Heritage Foundation.

The search, which involved the Deep Sea Vision company, used high-resolution sonar, with the wreckage being found almost 2,000 feet under the Atlantic Ocean. The search also involved the use of autonomous underwater drones and ended the mystery of where the aircraft came to rest.

Remittances to India hit...

(**Cont. from page - 2**) far more sensitive to geo-steadier than capital flows and are shaped mainly by labour market conditions in host economies rather than short-term political or security shocks.

This distinguishes remittances from more volatile capital flows such as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) and debt inflows, which are typically

far more sensitive to political risk and investor sentiment. The question had also sought a comparative, conflict-by-conflict breakdown of remittance flows since 2014. The government said it does not maintain remittance data segmented by individual conflict or war, offering instead the aggregate annual figures from RBI's BoP statistics.

vices previously offered at the embassy of India in Abu Dhabi and the Consulate General of India in Dubai.

The new portal offers a streamlined access to a wide range of services, including appointment booking, application tracking, fee information, service guidance and important

updates from the embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, and the Consulate General of India, Dubai. "With improved navigation, enhanced accessibility and a modern interface, applicants can now complete their requests more efficiently and stay informed throughout the process," it said on the website.