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## India and Kuwait: Partners in Progress, Prosperity and Peace

( Message from Her Excellency Paramita Tripathi, Ambassador of India to the State of Kuwait )

As India celebrates its 77th Republic Day, it is a joy and a privilege to reach out to my fellow Indians in Kuwait and to our Kuwaiti brothers and sisters. This special day marks the birth of our Republic based on the ideals of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity—values that resonate with every Indian heart, including the vibrant community here in Kuwait.

I take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister for their con-

tinued support of the strong India-Kuwait Strategic Partnership.

Today, India remains one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, charting a confident course toward becoming the third largest by 2030. From achievements in science and technology, like the Chandrayaan-3 mission, to our leadership in climate action and the digital economy, India's story is one of aspiration and steady transformation.



**Her Excellency  
Paramita Tripathi**

The friendship between India and Kuwait, nurtured over generations by traders and families, has been further energized by the historic visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in Dec, 2024. With bilateral trade exceeding US\$10 billion annually and deepening collaboration in healthcare, infrastructure and the digital economy, our partnership is aligned with India's Viksit Bharat 2047 and Kuwait's Vision 2035.

The Indian community of over one million in Kuwait is at the heart of this relationship, serving as a living bridge between our nations. We, at the embassy, place the highest priority on your welfare and thank you for your contributions to Kuwait's growth and for strengthening our bilateral ties.

On this joyous occasion, I extend my warmest greetings to the leadership and people of Kuwait and to all Indians residing here. May our Strategic Partnership continue to flourish for the prosperity of both our nations.

**Jai Hind ! Vande Mataram !**

## NRIs in Kuwait celebrate 77th Republic Day at Indian embassy

**KUWAIT CITY:** Despite the chilly weather, a large number of Indians gathered at the Indian embassy in Kuwait on Jan 26, to celebrate the 77th Republic Day of India. Community members from all walks of life, including families and children, attended the celebrations in large numbers.

The event commenced at 9 am with the unfurling of the Tricolour National Flag by Ambassador of India

Paramita Tripathi. This was followed by the singing of the National Anthem and the reading of the Hon'ble President of India's Address to the nation.

Earlier, the ambassador paid floral tributes by garlanding the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the embassy premises. To commemorate the 150th year of Vande Mataram, the gathering joined together in singing Vande Mataram, adding a mo-

( Cont. on page - 2 )



India's Ambassador in Kuwait Her Excellency Paramita Tripathi with performers during the 77th Republic Day celebrations at the Indian embassy in Kuwait.

## TAFI Western India begins 2026 with high-impact educational tour to Greece

**ATHENS:** The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) Western India marked a memorable and inspiring beginning to 2026 with a five night Educational Tour to Greece, specially curated for its members.

The programme brought together learning, destination exposure, networking and collaboration, reinforcing TAFI WI's commitment to empowering its members with global knowledge and partnerships.

The tour was supported by Global Destinations, a leading DMC specialising in Greece, WOTF Group Greece and held in association with IndiGo, coinciding with IndiGo's inaugural direct flight from India to Athens-

**Glimpses on page - 7**

a significant milestone for Indo-Greek tourism connectivity. A delegation of 17 leading tour operators from TAFI Western India and



Pune, led by Jay Kantawala, Chairman – TAFI Western India, travelled to Greece along with Pranav Kapadia, Founder and Managing Director, Global Destinations.

**LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE:** Athens and Rhodes-- The education- ( Cont. on page - 2 )







## India-EU blueprint

In a bold and pragmatic move, India and EU have concluded the “mother of all trade deals”. The long-awaited free trade agreement is to significantly expand the overall trajectory of two-way engagement as it will open up new opportunities for co-operation in diverse areas.

The FTA is expected to bring a qualitative change in deepening the overall bilateral ties in a range of sectors. The broad focus of the accord is on trade, defence and security, climate change, critical technologies and strengthening the rules-based global order. Import duty cuts on labour-intensive sectors such as textiles and footwear as well as cars and wines are part of the FTA. The two sides are also set to unveil a defence framework pact and a strategic agenda. The new partnership comes at a time when Europe is seeking to reduce its dependence on the US and China and deepen its diplomatic and economic ties to other regions. This is exactly what India also wants to do.

“Europe and India are making history today. We have concluded the mother of all deals,” observed Ursula von der Leyen, European Commission president. She added that the accord was a tale of “two giants” who chose partnership “in a true win-win fashion.” She also said it sends “a strong message that co-operation is the best answer to global challenges.” This deal is a perfect answer to “Hegemons” using tariffs as leverage. European Council President Antonio Costa said the partnership with the EU “will strengthen stability in the international system” at a time of “turmoil in the global order.”

This accord comes at a time when European companies in India are prepping for a fresh investment cycle and an overwhelming majority of these firms are planning to expand and deepen manufacturing in the country and also embed India more firmly into global supply chains.

As expected, the US is worried over this EU-India FTA. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent attacked this agreement, accusing Europe of indirectly funding the Russia-Ukraine war through energy trade routed via India. The senior aide to President Trump said European governments were undermining their own security stance by buying refined oil products from India that originate from Russia , while Washington continues to impose punitive tariffs on New Delhi for the same reason. This FTA could play a crucial role in bringing the US to the negotiating table.

This historic deal is to further integrate supply chains and strengthen joint manufacturing power between the two giant economies. It will also cut up to Euro 4 billion (\$4.7 billion) in annual tariffs for exporters and create jobs for millions of workers in India and in Europe. India is expected to increase its market share from five per cent to nine per cent in the EU’s ready-made garment (RMG) imports, unlocking an incremental annual export opportunity of nearly \$4-4.5 billion over the medium term. India is expected to reduce or eliminate tariffs for 96.6pc of EU exports, while EU will reciprocate with similar reductions in phases that eventually cover nearly 99pc of India’s shipments by trade value. India has included adequate safeguards in the FTA to protect its sensitive sectors. Modi has sent a strong message that co-operation is the best answer to global challenges.



## TAFI Western India begins 2026 with high-impact educational tour to Greece

( Cont. from page - 1 )

al itinerary was thoughtfully designed to provide members with first-hand destination knowledge, operational insights and confidence in selling Greece to Indian travellers.

In Athens, the group explored iconic landmarks, including the Acropolis and the Acropolis Museum, gaining deep insights into Greece’s classical heritage and its appeal for cultural travellers. A day cruise through the Argosaronic Gulf, covering Aegina, Hydra and Poros, showcased the versatility of Greece beyond mainland sightseeing—highlighting strong possibilities for island-hopping and cruise-based itineraries.

The tour then moved to Rhodes, one of Greece’s most fascinating islands, where members visited the Grand Master’s Palace, the immersive Throne of Helios 9D experience, Kallithea Springs and Filerimos. These visits offered valuable exposure to Rhodes as a destination rich in history, leisure, and experiential tourism.

( Cont. from page - 1 )

ment of patriotic fervour to the celebration. Addressing the gathering, Ambassador HE. Paramita Tripathi highlighted the strong and longstanding bilateral relations between India and Kuwait and reassured the Indian community of the embassy’s continued support. “The embassy is always ready to render all possible help to our nationals. We have 24-hour WhatsApp numbers for assistance and I am personally available during our monthly open house to listen to and address unresolved issues,” she said.

As a matter of guidance and convenience to the Indian community, the ambassador urged nationals to follow these key points: Strictly follow all local rules and regulations and stay informed about any chang-

**HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS & EXCEPTIONAL HOSPITALITY:** A key highlight of the programme was the official interactions with the Municipality of Rhodes and the Region of South Aegean Islands, giving members a deeper understanding of destination governance, tourism support and future collaboration opportunities.

On India’s Republic Day, the delegation was honoured with a visit to the Municipality of Rhodes, where members proudly sang the Indian National Anthem—a deeply emotional and symbolic moment that strengthened cultural ties and made the tour truly unforgettable.

The entire delegation was graciously hosted by Nikolas, CEO of WOTF Group Greece, who personally ensured seamless arrangements including hotels, transportation, internal flights, sightseeing, and dining experiences. Special attention was given to Indian dietary requirements, with vegetarian and Jain meals thoughtfully arranged

es or new rules introduced by the governments of Kuwait and India.

As a matter of guidance and convenience to the Indian community, the ambassador urged nationals to follow these key points:

- \*Promote Indian culture and heritage and ensure children remain connected to their mother tongue, regional dance forms, cuisine, festivals, and literature, especially through the celebration of statehood days.
- \*Focus on health and physical fitness by adopting a healthy lifestyle and balanced diet.
- \*Organise tree plantation drives under the “Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam” initiative and contribute to keeping neighbourhoods clean and green.
- \*Register with the Indian embassy through the link available on the embassy’s website, enabling the embassy to

throughout the tour. This aspect gave members strong confidence that Indian passengers’ specific meal preferences can be comfortably managed in Greece, alongside warm Greek hospitality.

**A STEP TOWARDS PROMOTING GREECE:** The tour concluded with enthusiastic appreciation from all participating members, who expressed their gratitude to TAFI Western India, Global Destinations, WOTF Group Greece and IndiGo for curating a highly enriching and professionally executed programme.

Members returned with renewed confidence and a collective commitment to position Greece as a prime destination in their upcoming summer programmes, backed by solid destination knowledge, reliable local partnerships, and enhanced connectivity.

Truly, a memorable and meaningful start to 2026 for TAFI Western India. Observed VS ABDULKAREEM, CMD Flycreative Online Limited who participated in the Educational Tour to Greece.

reach out quickly to nationals during emergencies. The ambassador also acknowledged the valuable support extended by various Indian community associations and groups, and expressed gratitude to the Government of Kuwait for its continued support to the Indian community living in the country.

The celebrations continued with vibrant cultural performances. These included patriotic songs by community members and colourful dance performances by students of Indian Community School and various other dance groups, which were warmly received by the audience. To mark the occasion, several newspapers in Kuwait released special Republic Day supplements and distributed free copies at the embassy premises.

### LIPSYNCH

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FOREX RATES		
As on 29th January 2026 (In rupees)		
Currency	BillBuy	BillSell
US Dollar	91.37	92.6
British Pound	126.31	128.12
Euro	109.11	111.46
Japanese Yen	59.74	60.7
Swiss Franc (CHF)	118.76	121.43
Canadian Dollar	67.25	68.78
Australian Dollar	64.41	65.82
Norwegian Krone	9.45	9.73
Swedish Krona	10.27	10.56
New Zealand Dollar	55.2	56.45
Hong Kong Dollar	11.56	11.92
Kuwaiti Dinar	296.75	307.44
Singapore Dollar	72.06	73.72
Saudi Arabian Riyal	24.05	24.81
U A E Dirham	24.61	25.33



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DAY 2 – HUBLI → GADAG → LAKKUNDI → HAMPI  
DAY 3 – HAMPI TEMPLE CIRCUIT  
DAY 4 – HAMPI → PATTADAKAL → AIHOLE → BADAMI  
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Emirates to build Cabin Crew Village to house up to 12,000 staff in Dubai

**DUBAI:** Dubai's flagship carrier Emirates has signed an agreement with Dubai Investments Park to acquire land for a new customs-built Cabin Crew Village.

Representing a multi-billion-dirham investment, the development will be a mixed-use and residential community, accommodating up to 12,000 cabin

The development is being delivered through a long-term lease arrangement. The Village will offer a broad range of amenities that support the health and wellbeing of the airline's crew community. The development will feature a multi-purpose hub with a selection of retail outlets, restaurants and food concepts, alongside modern

ment. Each building will also have its own dedicated facilities.

Emirates is planning to invest up to \$12 billion on its future home at the new terminal on infrastructure, including catering facilities and aircraft hangars, Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed, chairman and chief executive of Emirates Airline and Group said.

Emirates Group, which includes Emirates airline and ground-handling unit dnata, also revealed plans last year to hire 17,300 people across 350 roles to support the expansion of operations and bolster future capabilities. The Village will be located equidistant between Dubai International Airport (DXB) and Dubai World Central (DWC).

It is positioned to support the airline's long-term operational plans and move to Al Maktoum International Airport, while delivering the best possible living experience for its people.



crew members. Ground-breaking is planned for the second quarter of 2026, with the first phase expected to be completed in 2029. The Cabin Crew Village will consist of 20 contemporary residential buildings, each rising 19 floors.

fitness facilities, clinics and dedicated public spaces and parks.

Residents will be encouraged to embrace an active outdoor lifestyle, with walking trails, resort-style pools, landscaped grounds and green spaces woven throughout the develop-



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# GULF FAQs

## Do UAE labour laws limit working hours for maritime ship crew?

**I am a crew of maritime ship. I work usually more than 48 hours per week and the company is confirming that my work type is exempted from the provisions relating to the maximum limit of working hours. Is it true?**

It's true that your work as a crew of maritime ship is exempted from the provisions relating to the maximum limit of work-

ing hours, according to Article-15 of the Cabinet Resolution No. (1) Of 2022 Concerning the Executive Regulations of Federal Decree-Law No. (33) Of 2021 Regulating Labour Relations, (The following categories shall be exempted from the provisions relating to the maximum limit of working hours:

a. Chairmen and members of board of directors.



b. Persons occupying supervisory positions if the occupants of such positions enjoy the capacities of an employer.

c. Workers comprising

the crew of maritime ships and workers employed at sea and enjoy special service conditions due to the nature of their work.

d. Activities whose technical nature require its performance in successive shifts or rounds provided that the average of working hours does not exceed (56) hours per week.

## Shall I complain against my incompetent manager?

**I work in a Dubai-based company under a team leader who I don't believe has sufficient skills to be a manager. Many others in my team feel the same way and we have taken our concerns to the management, only to be turned away. I really like my company and profile, so**

**I wish to know if there is any legal way to complain against boss' incompetency?**

In the UAE, it is the responsibility of an employer to provide a safe and appropriate working environment to an employee in accordance with Article 13(13) of the Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021

on the Regulation of Employment Relations, which states: "The Employer shall provide a safe and appropriate working environment."

However, there is no specific legal provision that allows an employee to file a legal complaint solely on the basis of a manager's incompetence or lack of leadership skills.

Managerial inefficiency, in itself, does not constitute a legal breach unless it results in conduct that violates provisions of the UAE Employment Law or

an employee's contractual or statutory rights.

A complaint may be actionable against the manager if his conduct amounts to workplace harassment, discrimination, abuse of authority or creates a hostile work environment, in which case a formal complaint may be raised with the employer and if unresolved, with the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (MoHRE).

Article 14 (2) of the UAE Employment Law, which states, "It shall be prohibited to exercise sexual ha-

arrassment, bullying or any verbal, physical or mental violence against the employee by his employer, manager or colleagues."

In accordance with the aforesaid, in case your employer has internal grievance procedures, HR escalation channels or whistle blowing mechanisms through which concerns about management practices may be raised, you may approach and discuss it with them or approach MoHRE if the manager's conduct violates the law.

## Can a tenant let a relative stay in the house?

**I live in a two-bedroom apartment in Dubai with my wife and three children. My cousin sister is planning to move to Dubai and intends to stay with me until she finds a job. Do I need to inform or seek permission from the landlord/real estate company for this?**

2007 Regulating the Relationship between Landlords and Tenants in the Emirate of Dubai.

The law states: "The tenant must pay the rent on due dates and maintain the real property in such a manner as an ordinary person would maintain his own property.

Without prejudice to the tenant's obligation to carry out the restorations that have been agreed upon or which are customary for tenants to undertake, the tenant may not make any changes or carry out any restoration or maintenance works to the real property unless so permitted by the landlord and after obtaining required licences from the competent official entities."

In Dubai, a tenant is entitled to occupy and use a rented property for the purpose agreed in the tenancy contract.

The tenant is not permitted to change the nature of use of a property or allow others to occupy it in a manner that exceeds or contradicts what was agreed with a landlord in accordance with Article 19 of Dubai Law No. (26) of

## Can a non-Muslim woman seek alimony from husband if they have a child?

**A non-Muslim woman wants to get a divorce from her husband. Her question: Does she have the right to claim monthly alimony for herself from her husband knowing that they have one child? If yes, for how long?**

According to Article-9 of the Federal Decree-Law No. (41) Of 2022 on the Civil Personal Status, the father shall be liable for the expenses and costs of the mother's custody of the children during joint

custody, for a temporary period not exceeding two years in accordance with the findings of the accounting expert's report. But the wife's alimony shall lapse in the event that she gets married to another man, and in the event that her custody of the children ends for any reason. The alimony may be amended after each year or in accordance with the changing circumstances.

The divorced woman -- in the event that there

is no agreement on the conditions or controls of alimony or the other financial claims in the marriage contract ---may submit a request to the court, seeking a judgment of alimony from her ex-husband and any claims subsequent to divorce before the court.

In all cases, the granting of the application and its duration shall be subject to the discretion of the judge after evaluating the circumstances of the case.



# IndiGo extends flight cancellations to Tbilisi, Almaty, Baku, Tashkent

**MUMBAI:** IndiGo has extended the cancellation of flights to and from Tbilisi, Almaty, Baku and Tashkent until Feb 11, citing escalating tensions in Iran.

"Taking into account developments around Iran, we have made additional adjustments to the schedule of some flights. We are taking a cautious and

proactive approach, with customer and crew safety as our highest priority. As part of these measures, IndiGo flights to and from Tbilisi, Almaty, Baku and Tashkent have been cancelled until Feb 11, 2026," the airline said in a travel advisory.

The extension comes a day after the airline had



cancelled flights to and from these cities on Jan 26, 27 and 28. For these destinations, the airline flies over the Iranian airspace and due to the current situation, it is avoiding that airspace, an official said. Generally, the duration of flights from India to these

cities is in the range of six to seven hours. The airline operates flights with its A320 neo aircraft on these routes that do not have the range and fuel holding capacity to operate on longer alternative routes. The protests in Iran began on Dec 28, sparked by the

fall of the Iranian currency, the rial, and quickly spread across the country.

They were met by a violent crackdown by Iran's security forces, and an over two-week internet blackout - the most comprehensive in the nation's history. According to the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, at least 6,126 people were killed in Iran's crackdown on nationwide protests and many more are still feared dead.

## Metro to link Mumbai-Navi Mumbai airports

**MUMBAI:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has announced a new metro line connecting Mumbai and Navi Mumbai airports. The 35 km-long line received state cabinet approval the same day.

The state government has given its nod to build the metro on PPP model with state and centre each contributing 20pc of viability gap funding. According to Fadnavis, the metro will be 35 km long with a nine km underground stretch.

The estimated cost for the project, having 20 stations and intersections on three other metro routes, is to be around Rs 22,862 crore.

It is slightly higher than

the earlier estimate of Rs 18,000 crore given by Fadnavis at the announcement after the meeting.

"The metro route is estimated to be built in five years, but I have insisted that it should be built in three-and-a-half year," Fadnavis said while announcing the approval. The seamless movement between Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport and the newly operational Navi Mumbai International Airport will be crucial for transit flyers, airline crew, cargo operators and outstation travellers using LTT or other rail terminals. Road travel between the airports currently takes 90 minutes,

## Odia diaspora worried over stopping of Dubai-Bhubaneswar flight

**BHUBANESWAR:** Amid the ongoing operational turmoil faced by IndiGo Airlines, uncertainty has surfaced over the continuation of the direct international flight connecting Odisha with the UAE. The direct IndiGo service between Dubai and Bhubaneswar is likely to be discontinued from March 30, triggering concern among flyers and the Odia diaspora in the Gulf. Sources said online bookings for the Dubai-Bhubaneswar route beyond March 30 are currently not being accepted. The Bhubaneswar-Dubai direct flight launched in 2023 flew thrice a week.

Expressing concerns over the issue, the Odisha Samaj in UAE has written to chief secretary Anu Garg urging immediate intervention to prevent the dis-

continuation of the flight. The organisation said the proposed withdrawal of the service would adversely impact the Odia diaspora in the UAE.

### Ajit Pawar cremated

**BARAMATI:** Maharashtra's longest-serving Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar was cremated with full state honours and



tribute. Pawar (66) had died after a chartered aircraft crashed while landing at Baramati airport on Wednesday.

a 21-gun salute at Vidya Pratishthan grounds in Baramati. Tens of thousands attended the funeral, which saw leaders across party lines pay

The final rites were performed by his sons, Parth and Jay Pawar, in the presence of his wife Sunetra Pawar and members of the Pawar family.

# NRIs seek return to 182-datatx residency rule

**MUMBAI:** With the Union budget 2026-27 due on Feb 1, tax rules affecting visiting NRIs and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) are back in focus after industry body Bombay Chambers of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) flagged concerns over the complexity of residency norms introduced five years ago. In its pre-Budget memorandum, BCCI has asked the government to roll back changes made under the Finance Act, 2020, saying the current framework has made it harder for overseas Indians to assess their tax sta-

tus during visits to India.

Before the Finance Act, 2020, visiting NRIs and PIOs were treated as non-residents if their stay in India was below 182 days in a financial year, even if they had spent more than 365 days in India during the preceding four years. This meant they were not required to pay tax in India on income earned outside the country.

That position changed in 2020, when the government introduced graded extended residency rules, linking tax status not just to physical presence

but also to the level of India-sourced income.

"The restoration of the 182-day rule would represent a strategic trade-off with a net positive economic impact despite short-term revenue losses. The benefits extend beyond immediate fiscal metrics to include improved diaspora relations, forex stability, and domestic consumption," Nikita Seth, advocate at Jotwani Associates said. Seth said the 2020 shift to a 120-day threshold was driven by revenue considerations during a period of financial stress. "A reversion in 2026

would signal confidence in India's growth and recognise the NRI community as long-term economic partners rather than just revenue sources," she said.

**Under the revised provisions introduced by the Finance Act, 2020:**

- Visiting NRIs and PIOs are treated as non-residents if their stay in India during the relevant financial year is less than 120 days, instead of 182 days.

- If India-sourced income is less than Rs 15 lakh, they continue to be treated as non-residents provided their stay in India

is below 182 days, as was the case earlier.

- If India-sourced income exceeds Rs 15 lakh and the visiting NRI or PIO stays in India for 120 days or more but less than 182 days, the individual is treated as "not ordinarily resident".

These changes replaced a single test based on days of stay with multiple checks involving income thresholds and travel history. In its pre-Budget note, BCCI said the revised rules have led to confusion for taxpayers who earlier only had to track the number of days spent in India.



# GLIMPSES OF TAFI (WI) EDUCATIONAL TOUR TO GREECE

