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Canada changes eligibility norms of parents' super visa

OTTAWA: Canada is modifying the rules of parents' super visa by making it equitable and accessible to more families while ensuring parents and grandparents are financially supported during their stay in Canada.

Canada has made the Super Visa requirements and eligibility conditions

more flexible for parents and grandparents of Canadian citizens and permanent residents. Starting March 31, 2026, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) will change how it calculates family income for super visa eligibility. The aim is to make the programme more equitable and ac-

cessible to more families while ensuring parents and grandparents are financially supported during their stay in Canada.



Essentially, starting

March 31, the host's income requirements will change by extending the income assessment period from one year to two years and allowing the visiting parent or grandparent to supplement the host's income. The super visa is a multiple-entry visitor visa that allows parents and grandparents of Canadi-

an citizens and permanent residents to visit their family in Canada for longer periods.

Parents and grandparents can visit their children or grandchildren, if they're a permanent resident or a Canadian citizen, for five years at a time with a super visa. It provides multi- (Cont. on page - 2)

Unemployment rate falls to 3.1pc in 2025

NEW DELHI: The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025 reveals India's unemployment rate fell to 3.1pc in the usual status, showing a decline in educated and youth joblessness.

The unemployment rate

for persons aged 15 years and above in the usual status was 3.1pc in 2025, down from 3.2pc in 2024 and 3.6pc in 2022, according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025 released by the Ministry of Statistics and Pro-

gramme Implementation (MoSPI).

However, the unemployment rate using the current weekly status approach increased to 8.9pc in 2025 from 8.2pc in 2024. MoSPI said the CWS approach determines an individual's activity status based on the seven days preceding the survey date. Under this method, a person is considered unemployed in a week if they did not work even for one hour on any day during the reference week but sought or were available for work for at least one hour on any day during the same period. However, under the usual status approach, the ac-

S&P raises India's GDP forecast to 7.1pc

NEW DELHI: S&P Global Ratings has raised India's GDP growth forecast for the next fiscal to 7.1pc. It said that private consumption, investment and exports will be key drivers, but the conflict in the Mid-East could strain the fiscal position due to higher energy prices.

S&P has revised the 2025-26 growth upwards by 0.4 percentage points to 7.6pc and for 2026-27 fiscal by 0.2 percentage points to 7.1pc.

"We project real GDP growth to moderate to 7.1pc in the fiscal year ending in March 2027, (Cont. on page - 2)



Air India Express turns skies into art with Kochi Biennale-Themed Jet

KOCHI: In a vibrant celebration of art and culture, Air India Express has unveiled a specially designed Boeing 737 aircraft adorned with colors inspired by the Kochi-Muziris Biennale. The striking "art-wrap" transforms the aircraft into a flying tribute to one of India's most prestigious contemporary art festivals, based in Kochi.

The initiative aims to promote India's artistic heritage on a global stage, blending aviation with creativity while drawing attention to the Biennale's cultural significance. Passengers and onlookers alike can now experience a unique fusion of travel and art - right from the runway to the skies.

Noida airport--- a gateway into the future



The massive crowd at the inauguration of the Noida International Airport.

NOIDA: With Prime Minister lighting the lamp, the Phase-1 of the Noida International Airport (NIA) has officially commenced operations, significantly enhancing air travel options for the Delhi NCR region. Unlike traditional airports, travellers at Noida will not encounter crowded check-in counters or long, winding queues.

Instead, the airport is designed to minimise human intervention, relying on advanced software and self-service technologies to streamline operations. The Rs 11,200-crore facility, which aims

to handle 12 million passengers annually marks a pivotal step in regional aviation, as it integrates advanced technology into its operations from day one. India's latest greenfield airport is poised to revolutionise the travel experience with a fully automated system. The airport's first phase includes one runway of 3.9 km, a terminal area of 137,895 square metres, 48 check-in counters, 20 self-baggage drop points, nine security lanes and 10 boarding gates, with 28 parking stands and an hour-peak capacity of 30 (Cont. on page - 2)

Jeddah airport ranks third globally

JEDDAH: King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah ranked third globally among airports serving between 50 and 60 million passengers annually. It also secured fifth place among the world's most improved airports and ranked 27th overall on the list of the top 100 airports, advancing 17 positions from last year, according to the Skytrax 2026 Ranking.

The announcement was made at the recent Passenger Terminal Expo in London, reaffirming the airport's rapid progress in service quality and passenger experience, the Sau- (**Cont. on page - 6**)

S&P raises India's GDP forecast...

(**Cont. from page - 1**) compared with 7.6pc in fiscal 2026. Key drivers are resilient private consumption, a modest recovery in private investment and solid exports," the report said.

Further, the S&P expected the inflation to rise to 4.3pc in fiscal 2027 as it normalises from low levels. Ahead of RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, S&P expected the central bank to hold rates steady and maintain a neutral stance. The ongoing MidEast conflict will weigh on the Asia Pacific region's economies with many of the nations being major net energy importers relying heavily on MidEast

supply, it said. "We would expect one 25 bps rate hike in the second-half," S&P said. "Higher energy prices erode purchasing power and depress domestic demand. In countries such as India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia and Thailand, higher prices will force greater spending on subsidies and thereby strain fiscal positions," it added.

(**Cont. from page - 1**) activity status is determined based on the reference period of the last 365 days preceding the date of survey.

According to the PLFS report, the unemployment rate among educated persons (secondary and above) in the age group of 15 years and above in the usual status declined to 6.5pc in 2025 from seven per cent in 2024. Similarly, the unemployment rate for urban females eased to 6.4pc from 6.7pc over the same period, reflecting gradual progress in female workforce integration in cities.

The youth unemployment (15-29 years) also improved, falling to 9.9pc in 2025 from 10.3pc in 2024. Rural youth saw a decline from 8.7pc to 8.3pc, while urban youth unemployment dropped more noticeably from 14.3pc to 13.6pc. "On average, 61.6 crore persons (aged 15 years and above) were employed, in usual status, in the country during Jan-Dec 2025, of which 41.6 crore were male and 20 crore were female," the MoSPI said. The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for per-

sons aged 15 years and above remained stable at 59.3pc in 2025, with males at 79.1pc and females at 40pc. The Worker Population Ratio (WPR) stood at 57.4pc, almost unchanged from 2024, indicating sustained employment levels. Rural areas continued to show strength, with rural male LFPR at 80.5pc and rural female at 45.9pc , while urban WPR hovered near 50pc. The data also showed that in regular wage/salaried employment, average earnings for males increased from Rs 22,891 in 2024 to Rs 24,217 in 2025 (about 5.8pc growth), while for females, earnings rose from Rs 17,126 to Rs 18,353 (about 7.2pc growth).

Noida airport...

(**Cont. from page - 1**) flights per hour.

The passenger terminal is designed around movement and processing rather than ornament. The airport will use a common-use check-in system, DigiYatra-enabled gates, an airport management system, a baggage handling system and advanced IT infrastructure. Self-baggage drop, boarding gates, and a passenger processing system that supports both domestic and international operations.

Passengers can also use the airport's digital platform on their smartphones for real-time indoor navigation, guiding them directly to their gate, a specific lounge, or a duty-free shop. Sensors through-

The truth about immigration

WASHINGTON: Immigration is perhaps the most incendiary issue in the US today. Opponents claim that immigrants are a drain on public finances and compete with US citizens for jobs, housing, and other resources. But the nativists are as wrong as they are loud. The point that is often missed: Immigrants add to the demand and the supply sides of the

US economy.

Housing is a case in point. Immigrants comprise about one-third of America's construction workforce (32.5pc) and an even higher share of the jobs most relevant for home building, such as plasterers and stucco masons (61pc), dry-wall and ceiling-tile installers (61pc), roofers (52pc), painters (51pc) and carpet/floor/tile installers (45pc). They thus contribute to housing supply even more than to demand, relative to the rest of the population.

Immigrants also play critical roles in agriculture and health care—some 38pc of home health aides come from abroad—typically doing the dirty, unpleasant, and even risky jobs that native-born Americans don't want, at wages Americans would not accept. Meat-packing is one of the most dangerous occupations in

the US and an estimated 30-50pc of the workforce are undocumented immigrants.

Given this, US President Donald Trump's efforts to reduce the immigrant population—both through mass deportations and by reducing America's appeal to foreign-born workers—put direct upward pressure on the prices of critical goods and services, including food, housing and health care. The problem is so severe that the Trump administration is belatedly responding by making it cheaper to hire migrant farmworkers on temporary visas.

Immigration critics might counter that foreign-born workers still cause harm by putting downward pressure on US citizens' wages. But this assumes that immigrants are acting as

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Canada changes eligibility...

(**Cont. from page - 1**) alternative ways to meet the income requirement: Extending the income assessment period. Hosts and their co-signer (if applicable) may meet or exceed the income requirement in either one of the two taxation years preceding the time of application. Previously, IRCC assessed only the year before. If the hosts and their co-signer (if applicable) meet the required minimum percentage of income, the income of the visiting parents and grandparents can be added to cover the remaining amount.

ple entries for a period of up to 10 years. An applicant's host, that is, their child or grandchild in Canada, must provide proof that they meet the income requirements to support their family members while they're here. Parents and grandparents of Canadian citizens and permanent residents are still eligible for Canada's Super Visa; however, the Parents and Grandparents Program (PGP) remains closed in 2026. The new super visa rules will provide hosts with two

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New Zealand Dollar	53.72	55.03
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IndiGo launches Shanghai-Kolkata flight

KOLKATA: IndiGo airline on Monday launched its daily flight from Shanghai to Kolkata boosting the air connectivity between India and China. The IndiGo flight was launched by Indian Consulate General in Shanghai Pratik Mathur.

Meeting the IndiGo management team on the occasion, Mathur underlined the positive momentum, appreciated the growing confidence and enthusiasm being expressed through the booming air connectivity and the resurgent economic links between India and the region, the Indian Consulate in Shanghai said in a post on X. Indian airlines such as IndiGo and Air India have started connecting Shanghai with metro cities such as New Delhi and Kolkata.

Kolkata is the second Indian metro after New Delhi now linked with Shanghai, China's commercial capital.

The new route linking Shanghai-Kolkata is also expected to push the development of India's northeast, Mathur said. Kolkata and Shanghai traditionally enjoy very strong relations with Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore having visited the city thrice in 1913, 1923 and 1931, he said.

The new connectivity will further encourage people-to-people ties between eastern India and eastern China, led by the two major cities Kolkata and Shanghai respectively, he said. India and China resumed flights between different cities of the two countries in Oct last year after a five-

year freeze in relations. IndiGo operates flights from Kolkata to Guangzhou and Delhi to Guangzhou.

Chinese airline China Eastern also resumed flight operations from Shanghai to Delhi. The flight services between the two sides were suspended following the COVID-19 pandemic

Amid global disruptions, Indians changing travel plans

MUMBAI: Short-and medium-haul destinations like Thailand, Sri Lanka and Japan are experiencing a rise in demand.

A steady stream of headlines has flagged travel disruptions, energy curbs and oil worries. Social media is flooded with posts about flight delays, rerouted airspace and fuel shortages—enough to make anyone pause before booking a

holiday. To be fair, some of these concerns are not entirely unfounded.

Even in parts of Southeast Asia, governments are taking steps to manage fuel consumption. The Philippines has declared a national energy emergency, with its president warning that planes could be grounded amid a shortage of aviation fuel.

Vietnam has encouraged work-from-home measures amid a sharp increase in gas and diesel prices. Sri Lanka has cut back on lighting and energy consumption and introduced a four-day workweek to reduce transportation demand.

Kazan in Russia in 2024 followed by a second meeting on the sidelines of the SCO summit in Tianjin last year.

Besides flights, India and China have initiated a series of measures to normalise their relations. In July, India resumed granting tourist visas to Chinese nationals.

Yet, travel demand itself hasn't taken a hit. People are still planning holidays, just more thoughtfully than before.

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GULF FAQs

Can employers enforce pay cuts ?

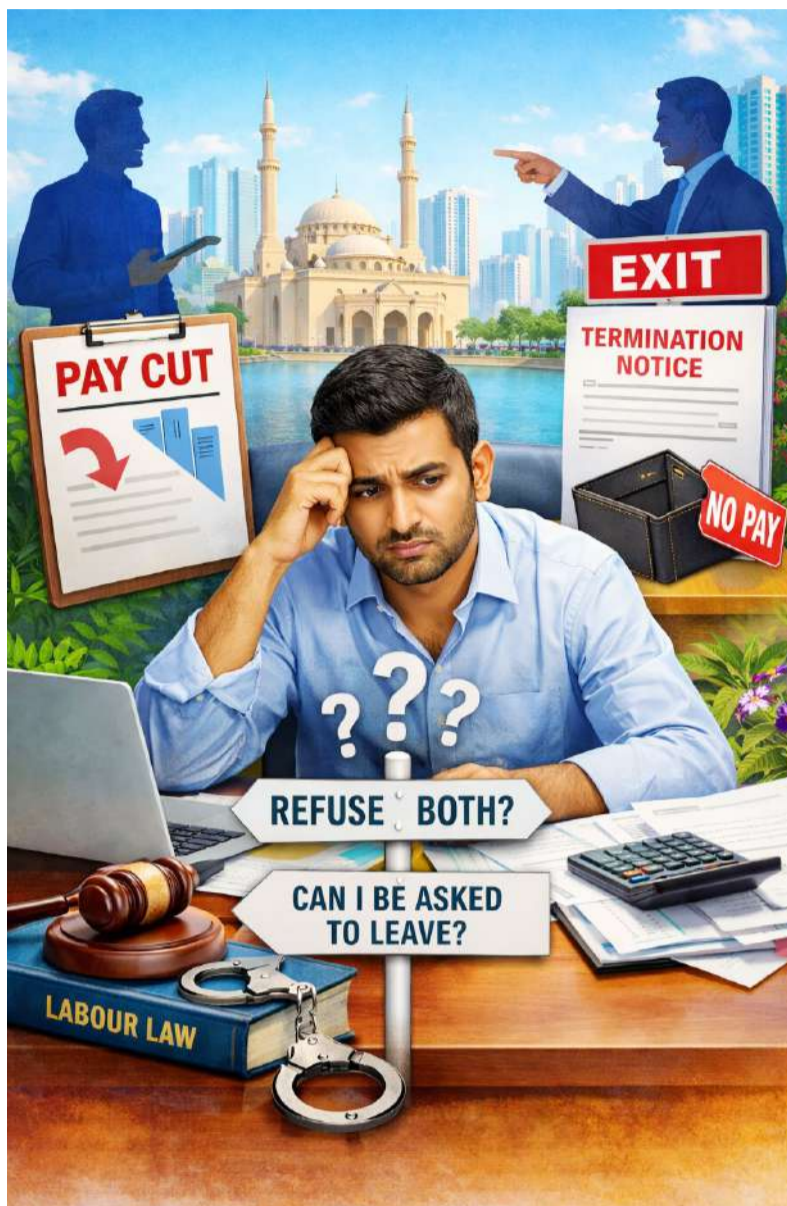
My company in mainland Sharjah is going through some financial difficulties. I am told they would give some employees two options: Pay cut or leave without pay. I just wanted to understand the legality of these options. What happens if I refuse both? Can I be asked to leave?

The financial difficulty of an employer does not in itself relieve an employer from its contractual obligations towards its employees.

The provisions of the UAE employment law and the subsequent resolutions are applicable. In the UAE, an employee is entitled to receive salary and statutory leave benefits in accordance with the provisions of Federal Decree Law No.

33 of 2021 on the Regulation of Employment Relations (the "Employment Law").

Under Article 22 (2) of the Employment Law, the salary should be paid by an employer to an employee in accordance with an employment contract executed by an employer and an employee and the applicable regulations. "An employer is obligated to pay the salary to its employees on their due dates in accordance with the systems approved by the ministry and the conditions, controls and proce-



dures specified in the executive regulation of this decree by law."

Further, Article 29 of the Employment Law provides for annual leave with full pay and states that: "Without prejudice to the employee's rights acquired for the period preceding the date of enforcement of the provisions of this Decree by law, the employee shall

be entitled to an annual leave with full pay of not less than: 30 days for each year of his extended service."

Accordingly, an employer is required to grant statutory leave with pay to its employees as prescribed under the Employment Law and any adjustment to leave without pay or any reduction of salary would require the written consent of an employee and an amendment to the employment

contract in accordance with the applicable regulations. In accordance with the aforementioned provisions of the law, while Article 43 of the Employment Law allows an employer to terminate employment of an employee for a valid reason by serving the required notice period, the mere refusal by an em-

ployee to accept a temporary reduction in salary or unpaid leave may not, by itself, justify termination, particularly if an employee wishes to continue employment under the existing contractual terms.

Accordingly, an employer experiencing financial constraints may propose alternatives such as salary reductions or proceeding on unpaid leave, but such a proposal would require the employee's acceptance.

In the absence of such acceptance, an employee may expect that an employer may either continue the employment in accordance with the existing contractual terms or proceed with termination in compliance with the Employment Law, including serving a notice period and settling all applicable statutory dues.

Applicable laws: Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021 on the Regulation of Employment Relations. Federal Decree Law No. 51 of 2023 on Financial Restructuring and Bankruptcy.

Have I violated the resignation rules?

I worked for a company for three years. Three months ago, the company did not pay my salary due to a sudden financial crisis so I quit my job without notice. I then filed a complaint in the Labour Office to get my dues, but the company filed a counter complaint over notice period payment. Did my resignation without notice violate the law?

The labour law allows an employee to quit his job without notice, while retaining his rights to end-of-service benefits, if the employer is in breach of his obligations to the worker. However, a worker is required to notify the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization about the issue 14 days before leaving the job. The ministry will then ask the employer to rectify the breach. If

the employer fails to do so, then the employee's decision to quit without notice is justified.

Nevertheless, if an employee fails to notify the ministry, he has to serve the notice period agreed upon in the employment contract or compensate the employer financially. On notice period, the law says that the party who does not abide by the notice period shall pay to the other party compensation, which is called notice period allowance, even if the absence of notification does not cause damage to the other party.

The compensation shall be equal to the worker's wage for the full notice period or the remaining part thereof. So, if you did not notify the ministry before you quit, the company has the right to demand notice period payment.

Can employers refuse to accept an employee's resignation ?

I have a friend who submitted her resignation to her employer, but the employer refused to accept it. Instead, the employer said that if she does not come to work, they will mark her as absent and deduct her salary or file an absconding case against her. Does the employer have the right to refuse to accept an employee's resignation?

An employer does not have the right to refuse an employee's resignation or force the employee to continue working.

However, the resignation should be submitted through the official work email or the company's internal system so that it serves as evidence in case the employer later raises accusations.

UAE labour law grants both parties in an employment relationship the right to terminate the contract. Article 42 of Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021 states that an employment contract may be terminated at the request of either party, provided the provisions of the law regarding termination and the notice period

agreed in the contract are followed.

Article 43 further states that either party may terminate the employment contract for a legitimate reason, provided the other party is notified in writing and the agreed notice period is served. The notice period must not be less than 30 days and not more than 90 days. Additionally, Article 14 prohibits the use of force. It states that an employer may not use any means to compel a worker, threaten them with penalties or force them to work or provide services against their will.

Airlines face rough weather, seek urgent govt help

NEW DELHI: High aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices, constant flight cancellations due to war in West Asia, pilot shortage and a weakening rupee may make tickets costlier this summer. Airlines have planned for muted growth despite strong demand.

India's largest airline In-

diGo is slashing flights by two per cent and is seeking approval for reduced 13,900 weekly flights in this busy summer season. This will be two per cent less than last year.

Airlines are waiting for the dreaded April 1 when domestic marketing companies review jet oil pric-

es, this time most likely upwards. The difference between a barrel of crude and jet fuel shot up to \$100 before cooling. Fuel make up around 30pc of operating expenses of an airline.

Despite imposing fuel surcharge, airlines are not happy and they even



have warned that many aircraft will be grounded if fuel prices flare up further. The federation of Indian Airlines – comprising Air India, IndiGo and SpiceJet -- have written to the government that they

are facing financial crisis threatening their viability.

The government is working out plans to bail out airlines. Talks are being conducted between the government and oil marketing companies.

Despite global headwinds, India's trade performance robust

NEW DELHI: India's trade performance has remained robust despite global headwinds, with exports continuing on a steady growth path in both the current fiscal and the medium term, said Minister of State for Commerce Jitin Prasada. To address rising export risks due to geopolitical tensions in the Gulf and West Asia, Prasada said the government had introduced a time-bound "RELIEF" scheme. This initiative is being implemented through the Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC), which provides risk mitigation support for exporters.

Other supporting initiatives include the Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES), aimed at strengthening export-linked infra-

structure nationwide. India is also accelerating its transition to technology-driven trade governance. Platforms such as the 24x7 EIC interface, Trade Intelligence & Analytics system, Common Digital Platform for Certificates of Origin, and Trade e-Connect portal are streamlining export processes.

These digital systems enable real-time compliance tracking, faster approvals and improved access to global market intelligence, making the export ecosystem more efficient, transparent, and data-driven.

During April-Jan of FY 2025-26, India's total exports of merchandise and services rose by \$36 billion, marking a 5.26pc increase—from \$679.02 billion in the same period last

fiscal to \$714.73 billion. The growth reflects resilience amid persistent global uncertainty, supply chain disruptions and volatile commodity prices.

Over the longer term, India's exports have demon-

strated sustained momentum. Between FY 2021-22 and FY 2024-25, exports grew at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.9pc, rising sharply from \$497.90 billion in 2020-21 to \$828.25 billion in 2024-

Financial markets in red as war goes unabated

MUMBAI: Global equity markets traded in the red on Monday as the US-Israel-Iran war appeared to extend further, with Houthi rebels in Yemen joining in.

From the US to Japan and Hong Kong, equity indices posted declines of one to three percent as the war entered its second month. Dow Futures and S&P Futures were marginally higher by 0.07pc

and 0.16pc respectively, according to Bloomberg TV. The weak trend followed losses in US markets, where the Dow Jones and S&P 500 fell by 1.73pc (793 points) and 1.67pc (108 points), respectively, while the Nasdaq declined 2.15pc or 459 points, to close at around 20,948.

Asian markets followed their American peers with Japan's Nikkei shedding over three per cent or 1,640 points, while South Korea's Kospi declined by almost 3.2 pc. Hong Kong's

Hang Seng also fell by 224 points or 0.9pc

On the domestic front, India's Sensex and Nifty faced a sell-off on Monday. The Sensex was down by almost 1.6pc or 1,160 points, while the Nifty was trading lower by close to 1.48pc or 337 points.

The sell-off came as the war showed signs of further escalation, with Iran-backed Houthi rebels attacking Israel, even as peace talks between Iran and the US continued without significant progress.

The truth about immigration

(Cont. from page - 2) a relatively close substitute for US labour, and the evidence suggests that they are not. Immigrant labour largely complements, rather than replaces, that of native-born Americans.

While immigrants constitute only 14-15pc of the US population, they account for nearly 30pc of entrepreneurs. A robust 46pc of companies on the Fortune 500 List—including Apple, Amazon, ACE Hardware,

DoorDash, Google, Nvidia and Levi-Strauss—were founded by immigrants or their children. With AI-related or venture-capital-backed firms, the immigrant founder share exceeds 40pc and roughly two-thirds of leading AI companies in the US include immigrants among their founders.

Skilled immigration enhances technological innovation—immigrants account for a large share of

patents filed in the US each year—and boosts productivity growth, particularly in science- and engineering-related fields (83pc of PhD-level computer scientists working in America are foreign-born). As technologies like AI, semiconductors and biotechnology become central to global economic and military competition, the ability to attract foreign talent has become a strategic imperative.

Jeddah airport ranks...

(Cont. from page - 2) di Press Agency reported. This achievement extends the efforts of Jeddah Airports Company to enhance the passenger experience and improve operational efficiency and achieve its strategic objectives. It is noteworthy that ranking third globally in the mega airport category is one of

the key customer experience targets for 2026.

The progress reflects continuous improvement in performance indicators related to passenger experience and boosts the airport's position as one of the Kingdom's main gateways, particularly in serving pilgrims arriving to perform Haj and Umrah.