

# ASSIGNMENTS ABROAD TIMES



MUMBAI: SATURDAY, APRIL 09, 2022 VOL. XXX NO. 6 AISHWARYA PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD. ESTD. 1993 6 PAGES PRICE ₹ 10

## Emirates ID to replace UAE residency visa stamp in passports

Our UAE Correspondent

THE UAE is doing away with the residency visa stickers and stamps in passports of foreigners, replacing it with the unique national identity card, Emirates ID, as proof of their residency status.

The decision will take effect from April 11, 2022. This means that the UAE residents will no longer need to stamp their residency visas on their passports.

Up until now, an expatriate with a residency visa would have a sticker inserted into their passport and stamped after receiving a visa, which could be for two, three, five or ten years, following mandatory medical checks.

The residence visa stamp is applied as a sticker on the

holder's passport once he or she completes residency procedures. The stamp has information such as the sponsor details, date of issue and expiry date, along with residency file number. This also means the issuance or renewal of residency visas and Emirates IDs will be in one application.

The new procedure will be shared with airlines to allow them to verify the validity of residence status by checking passport numbers alongside Emirates ID cards that have residency-related information.

The decision will reduce the paperwork associated with the process of issuing and renewing the residency visa. The most practical advantage is the visa won't take up a page of expatriates' passports.

Smart gates at airports in the UAE now accept biometric passports. If the passenger is registered for the smart gates, he can pass through by simply looking at the green light on top of the camera to verify his biometrics.

According to the Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs and Ports Security (ICA), the move comes in implementation of the Cabinet decision to support the development of services provided and apply best practices. It aims to reduce the steps associated with the process of issuing and renewing residency visas and will now instead be linked to the Emirates ID.

The authority said that the ICA smart application provides the possibility of obtaining an

electronic copy of the ID upon submitting the issuance or renewal request, adding that the new generation of the Emirates ID card issued to foreigners residing in the country will include all details mentioned previously in the residency stamp, including personal and professional data, the issuer and other readable and non-readable data on the face of the card.

Major General Saeed Rakan Al Rashidi, Acting Director-General for Foreigners Affairs and Ports at ICA, said that the previous form of residency stamps will only be available online via the authority's smart application, in a step aimed at enhancing transitional flexibility towards using the identity card as an alternative.



## Oman Labour Ministry reduces expat recruitment licence fee

Our Oman Correspondent

OMAN's Ministry of Labour has reduced fees charged against expatriate manpower recruitment licences for all professions.

This is in implementation of the Royal Directives of Sultan Haitham bin Tariq on the cancellation and reduction of some government service fees.

The decision seeks to reduce economic burdens on private sector establishments and mitigate the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic in the Sultanate of Oman.

Sheikh Nasr Amer Al Hosni, Labour Affairs Undersecretary, told *Oman News Agency* that the move is expected to reflect positively on the private sector's



ability to employ Omanis.

The Ministry of Labour will offer additional incentives to private sector establishments that achieve high percentage of Omanisation within three segments or categories of firms

where job classification has been designated in accordance with the skills needed for each profession.

The expatriate labour recruitment ratios will be calculated on par with the said classifications,

said Mr Al Hosni, noting that the new fee entitles an establishment for 30 per cent discount if it sticks to the required Omanisation percentage, as follows:

Category 1: from OMR 301 to OMR 211; Category 2: from OMR 251 to OMR 176; and Category 3: from OMR 201 to OMR 141.

The decision reinstates expatriate labour recruitment fees at small and medium enterprises, where fees for the recruitment of one to five expatriate workers stood at OMR 101 and six to ten workers OMR 151.

With a view to maintaining balance in Omanisation across all business segments, the ministry is currently studying ways to designate certain Omanisation percentages for each of these categories.

## New scheme for SMEs in UAE

Our UAE Correspondent

THE UAE's Ministry of Economy has launched a new vision for the National Programme for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), aimed at providing entrepreneurs and SME owners with several new and integrated initiatives and services.

These include the Government Procurement Programme, the Business Support Programme, and the Financing Solutions Programme.

Ahmad Belhouf Al Falasi, Minister of State for Entrepreneurship and SMEs, said the UAE placed absolute faith on entrepreneurs, and recognised the importance of entrepreneurship as a major driver for building the future economy and achieving more flexibility, sustainability and innovation in the national economy.

The minister noted that the National Programme for SMEs has so far formed more than 25 partnerships with leading institutions in the public and pri-

vate sectors. He pointed out that SMEs today represent 94 per cent of the total companies and institutions operating in the country and contribute more than 50 per cent to the country's GDP.

"Through the new programmes and initiatives we look

partnership with the Ministry of Finance to enable Emirati entrepreneurs to register on the Federal Procurement Platform in a more efficient and seamless manner. The programme will allocate special workshops on the platform to enable member entrepreneurs to access informa-



forward to achieving further progress in the country's entrepreneurship system by providing integrated services to UAE national entrepreneurs, serving their business growth and enhancing their market share."

The minister said the Ministry of Economy has renewed its

tion about procurement and contracts available in the federal government.

The programme will also work in close co-ordination with the Ministry of Education, the Emirates Foundation for Health Services, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation.

## UAE job market on recovery path

Our UAE Correspondent

THE UAE job market has recovered strongly from the pandemic-induced slowdown, helped by the government's fiscal and monetary measures.

About 76 per cent of employers in the Arab world's second-largest economy plan to expand their workforce in 2022, a survey by jobs portal <Bayt.com> and market research company YouGov found.

About two-thirds of professionals in the UAE will actively look for new jobs in the first half of this year as business confidence and hiring activity return to pre-pandemic levels, recruitment company Robert Walters said.

To be eligible for the UAE Top Companies list, a company must have at



least 500 employees as of December 31, 2021, and the attrition rate can be no higher than 10 per cent, according to LinkedIn.

The most sought-after skills at the UAE's best employer Chalhoub Group are luxury goods,

retail sales and visual merchandising, while the job roles in demand are those of sales executive, fashion consultant and make-up artist, LinkedIn said.

At Mubadala Investment Company, in-demand roles include invest-

ment specialists, senior legal counsel and investment associates, the list revealed.

At Mediclinic and Aster DM Healthcare, the most in-demand roles are registered nurses, pharmacists, hospital administrators and medical doctors.

The Covid-19 pandemic opened up a range of employment prospects for certain segments of healthcare sector. Healthcare jobs now sought after in the UAE include nurses, laboratory technicians and general practitioners, according to recruitment agency Hays.

The most sought-after roles at lenders HSBC and Mashreq Bank are those of premier client manager, service officer, relationship manager, compliance officer and personal banker, LinkedIn found.

Daman is prioritising jobs for customer service representatives, business development managers and financial officers, while insurance advisers, sales managers and financial advisers are sought after at MetLife, according to the LinkedIn list.

## Top 15 UAE cos to work for

Our UAE Correspondent

DUBAI-based luxury retailer Chalhoub Group is the best company to work for in the UAE this year, according to LinkedIn.

Abu Dhabi's strategic investment arm Mubadala Investment Company, healthcare provider Mediclinic, Europe's largest bank HSBC and hospitals operator Aster DM Healthcare complete the top five preferred employers,

according to the 2022 LinkedIn Top Companies List.

Other sought-after employers in the UAE include national health insurer Daman, Al Tayer Group, cosmetics company L'Oréal, Dubai lender Mashreq Bank and life insurer MetLife, according to the professional network.

Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank, Gulf Marketing Group (parent of Sun & Sand Sports), business conglomerate and mall operator Majid Al Futtaim, e-commerce com-

pany Amazon and energy services company Schneider Electric round out the top 15 list.

"This list is meant to guide professionals at every stage - whether that means a career pivot, jumping back into the workforce after a hiatus or investing in new skills," Lynn Chouman, Senior News Editor at LinkedIn, said.

The seven criteria LinkedIn used to identify the best companies in the UAE were the



ability to advance, skills growth, company stability, external opportunity, company affinity, gender diversity and spread of educational backgrounds. The companies were analysed from January to December last year.



## ASSIGNMENTS ABROAD TIMES

### AT YOUR FINGER TIPS

**YOU CAN ACCESS BOTH E-PAPER AND MOBILE APP WITH ONE PAYMENT**

**EXISTING SUBSCRIBERS ALSO CAN AVAIL THIS FACILITY**

AVAILABLE ON

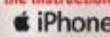
**ANDROID PLAY STORE**

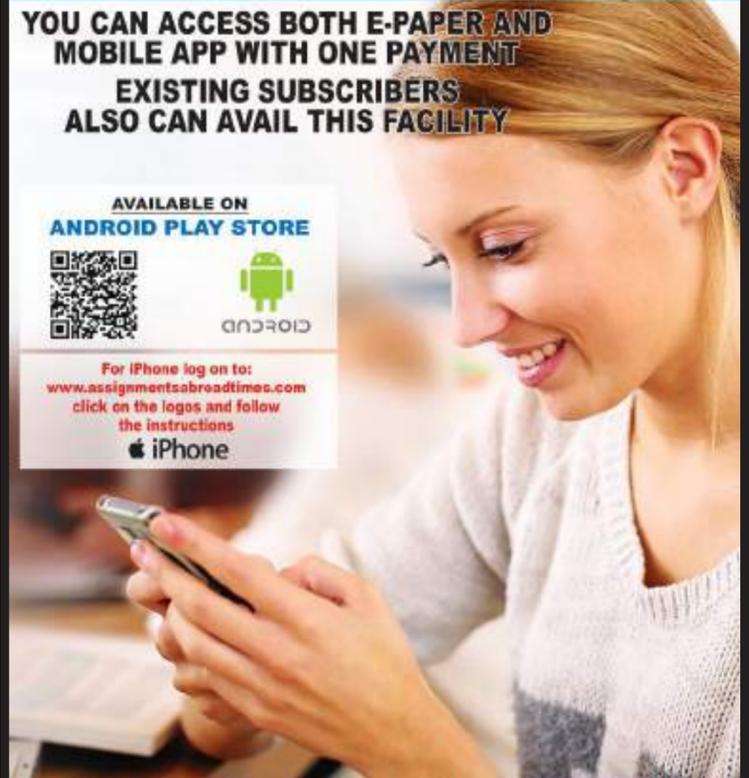



For iPhone log on to:

[www.assignmentsabroadtimes.com](http://www.assignmentsabroadtimes.com)

click on the logos and follow the instructions





**For e-Paper Subscription, visit: [www.assignmentsabroadtimes.com](http://www.assignmentsabroadtimes.com)**





# GeM portal gets over one lakh weavers, artisans on board

The portal will enable them to sell their products directly to various government departments and organisations

AAT News Service

THE Central government endeavours to create an ecosystem of marketing platforms, domestic as well as international, physical as well as virtual so as to improve the outreach and enhance sale of handloom products, said Darshana Jardosh, Union Minister

financial assistance is provided to the eligible handloom agencies/weavers for raw materials, common infrastructure development, marketing of handloom products in domestic/overseas markets, Weaver MUDRA Loans etc.

The government also strives to enhance the profit margins of weavers through Raw Material

sistent supply and quality parameters are maintained in the market, thus helping arrest profiteering by the intermediaries.

In addition to the above, to support direct product selling to handloom customers, marketing expos and events are organised. This will help alleviate intermediaries, arrest price fluctuations due to the same and ensures

handloom organisations, interest subvention upto seven per cent and credit guarantee fees on loans for a period of three years are provided.

Steps have been taken to onboard weavers and artisans on Government e-Marketplace (GeM) to enable them sell their products directly to various government departments and organisations. So far, about 1.5 lakh weavers have been onboarded on the GeM portal. Weavers are facilitated to sell their products online and 23 e-commerce platforms have been associated by Ministry of Textiles under a policy framework, said the minister.

For export promotion of handloom products, the Handloom Export Promotion Council has been organising international fairs. To enhance productivity, marketing capabilities and ensure better incomes, 135 handloom producer companies have been formed in different states.

India Handloom Brand (IHB) has been launched for branding of high-quality handloom products. The main objective of IHB is to promote production of niche handloom products with high quality, authentic designs with zero defects, and zero effect on environment.

Design Resource Centres have been set up in Weavers' Service Centres in Delhi, Mumbai, Varanasi, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Bhubaneswar, Guwahati and Kancheepuram to build and create design-oriented excellence in the handloom sector and to facilitate weavers, exporters, manufacturers and designers access design repositories for sample/product improvisation and development, added Ms Jardosh.



of State for Textiles.

The Ministry of Textiles is implementing various schemes across the country to support handloom sector and remove the difficulties faced by handloom weavers. Prices of handloom products are market driven, and therefore price fluctuations reflect in the profit margins of weavers, said Ms Jardosh.

Under the National Handloom Development Programme,

Supply Scheme by providing freight reimbursement on transportation of all types of yarn, and 15 per cent price subsidy on cotton hank yarn, domestic silk, woollen and linen yarn and blended yarn of natural fibers with quantity restrictions.

This scheme also endeavours to set the benchmark price and quality of yarn in the open market so that prices remain within reasonable limits and con-

remunerative prices to handloom weavers. Also, price subsidy of 15 per cent is provided on certain types of yarns, bringing down input cost for the weavers, she said.

Under the Weaver MUDRA/Concessional Credit Scheme, margin money assistance at 20 per cent of the loan amount subject to a maximum of ₹ 25,000 for individual weaver/weaver entrepreneur and ₹ 20 lakh for



The Union Minister for Defence, Rajnath Singh, launching the Mehar Baba Competition-II, during the Air Force Commanders' Conference at Air HQ (Vayu Bhawan), in New Delhi. The competition aims at encouraging the proprietary design, development, manufacturing and production of low-cost, high-impact solutions for swarm drone technology for utilisation in varied domains, including disaster relief operations

## \$650 bn exports possible in current fin year: Goyal

Export Promotion Councils and entrepreneurs should avail of the government's initiatives towards ease of doing business, such as obtaining clearances through the National Single Window System

AAT News Service

IT is possible to achieve exports of \$650 billion within the current financial year. The \$400 billion target of merchandise exports is within sight and the services sector should strive for \$250 billion exports, said Piyush Goyal, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry.

Chairing a review meeting

of all major Export Promotion Councils (EPCs). Mr Goyal said the country achieved \$300 billion merchandise exports in the first nine months of the current financial year. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry will resolve the issues of EPCs to attain even higher export targets in the next financial year.

"We can set a much higher goods exports target in the last

quarter of this financial year. Despite the Omicron fear factor weighing high, we touched \$37 billion goods exports in December alone and \$16 billion this month," said Mr Goyal.

The EPCs and entrepreneurs should avail of the government's initiatives towards ease of doing business, such as obtaining clearances through the National Single Window System. The industry representatives should pursue their demands during the various Free Trade Agreement negotiations.

Speaking of the government's efforts to improve ease of living and the ease of doing business, the minister said more than 25,000 compliances have been reduced. The government is willing to listen to new ideas, engage with industry at every level and work as an enabler, facilitator and partner.



## Projection mapping show on Red Fort throughout the year

Beautifully conceptualised, scripted and executed 30-minutes show is a one-of-its-kind visual and cultural treat



AAT News Service

THE Red Fort Festival – Bharat Bhagya Vidhata, one of the most anticipated events in India and one of the world's largest cultural extravaganzas, was held recently at the country's iconic 17th Century monument in New Delhi, Red Fort.

A joint collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism celebrating Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the event featured a spectacular thematic cultural fusion

showcasing country's rich history and a kaleidoscopic diversity in art, heritage, culture, cuisine and more.

The festival had events, such as Matrubhumi – country's first projection mapping show on the ramparts of Red Fort; Yatra – a 360° Immersive Experiences highlighting the country's pre-eminence as the oldest living civilisation; artistes of India performing on the Rang Manch Bharat Gaurav Exhibition; Sattrangi – handicrafts and

textiles showcase; Khelgaon – kid's corner; ice-skating rink and Segway; foods of India; daily parade; and much more.

While, Bharat Bhagya Vidhata has already earned its place as one of the greatest cultural melange in the country, Matrubhumi is receiving an overwhelming response at the cultural extravaganza. The show offers a grand spectacle using light, sound and music with state-of-the-art technology. It highlights rich and diverse culture of India

through its long, amazing, and chequered history and stirs numerous emotions of patriotism to instill pride among the citizens.

Beautifully conceptualised, scripted and executed, this 30-minutes show is a one-of-its-kind visual and cultural treat. Due to the overwhelming response to the grandeur projection at the festival, the show has now been made a permanent place at the Red Fort, and will be continued throughout the year.

## Indian Attractions

Urgent Requirement For Singapore, Dubai, Qatar Based Co. Involved With Cruise Ship, Shipyard And Airport Maintenance Work In India.

- Driver (LMV/HMV)
- AutoCAD
- Plumber / Painter
- Electrician
- Diesel Mechanic
- Fitter / Scaffolder
- Safety Officer
- CNC - OPT
- Security Guard
- Shuttering Carp.
- Fabricator
- Sandwich Maker
- Mason (All Types)
- Accountant / Cashier
- Wiper
- JCB / Pkltain
- Ductman / Oiler
- Forklift Operator
- Mobile Crane Operator
- Computer Opt.
- CDP / Bartender
- Helper
- AB/OC
- Front Office Executive
- Restaurant Assistants Manager
- Mechanical Engineer
- A/C Technician
- Laundry Man
- Furniture Carp.
- Welder (All Types)
- Office Boy

Apply Immediately with copy of Biodata Passport size photo & all relevant documents.

Sal Min ₹1,000/- to Max ₹2,30,000/- FREE FOOD + ACCOMMODATION + TRAVELLING ALL + OT

HAYAT PLACEMENT SERVICE PVT. LTD. (Sector 5, N. Manmohan Milhawali, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai)

Call: +91 9076412985

web: www.hayatplacementservice.in Email: hayatplacement@gmail.com

URGENT REQUIRED FOR SINGAPORE, DUBAI & QATAR BASED COMPANY INVOLVED CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE WORK IN INDIA

WALKING INTERVIEW IS ON DATED 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2022

- Welder (All Types)
- A/C Technician
- Supervisor (All Types)
- Chargehand (All Types)
- Electrician
- Electrical Engineer
- Cashier
- Steel Fixer
- QA/QC
- Diesel Mechanic
- Foreman (All Types)
- Salesman
- Rigger / Plumber
- Auto Cad (2D/3D)
- Cook (All Types)
- Mason (All Types)
- Fitter (All Types)
- Safety Officer
- Accountant
- Painter (All Types)
- Fabricator
- Steward / Waiter
- Technician (Inst./Elec./Mech./HVAC)
- Operator (JCB/Packlain/Forklift/Crane)
- Scaffolder
- Data Entry
- Sand Blaster
- CNC / VMC Machine Opt.
- Customer Services Executive
- Civil & Mechanical Engineers
- Carpenter (All Types)
- Room & Office Boy / Helper

Apply with copy of Biodata & 2 Passport Size Photo & All Relevant Documents

Free Food + Accommodations + Travelling Expenses etc.

Min ₹ 35000/- to Max ₹ 245000/-

Salary Starts From

Office No. A 410-411, 2<sup>nd</sup> Flr, Vashi Plaza, Sector 17, Vashi, Navi Mumbai - 400703

Call: +91 8779196183

+91 8369910977

+91 8779196960

Email: inayatmanagement@gmail.com

URGENTLY REQUIRED FOR SINGAPORE, DUBAI & KUWAIT BASED CO. WORK IN INDIA

WALK-IN INTERVIEW IS ON PROCESS - DATED 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2022

- Carpenter (All Types)
- Welder (All Types)
- Painter (All Types)
- A/C Technician
- Safety Officer
- Electrician
- Fabrication
- Steel Fixer
- Driver (LMV/HMV)
- Diesel Mechanic
- Foreman (All Types)
- Ordinary Seaman
- Rigger / Plumber
- Cook (All Types)
- Steward / Waiter
- QA / QC
- Mason (All Types)
- Accountant
- Salesman
- Cashier
- Fitter (All Types)
- Painter (All Types)
- Electrical Engineer
- Able Seaman
- CNC / VMC Machine Opt.
- Civil & Mechanical Engineers
- Technician (Inst./Elec./Mech./HVAC)
- Operator (JCB/Packlain/Forklift/Crane)
- Customer Service Executive
- Restaurant Assistant Manager
- Auto Cad (2D/3D)
- Computer Operator (Hard/Soft/Data Entry)
- Supervisor (All Types)
- Room & Office Boy / Helper
- # B Captain / Stewkeeper

Apply with copy of Biodata & 2 Passport Size Photo & All Relevant Documents

Free Food + Accommodations + Travel Expenses + Transportation Provide by Company

Min ₹ 35000/- to Max ₹ 245000/-

Office No. A 410-411, 2<sup>nd</sup> Flr, Vashi Plaza, Sector 17, Vashi, Navi Mumbai - 400703

Call: +91 8779196183

+91 8369910977

+91 8779196960

Email: saeidalabourervicesllp@gmail.com

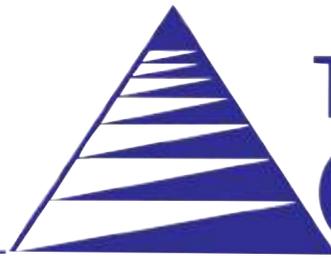
URGENTLY REQUIRED MANPOWER FOR CEMENT FACTORY

- MECHANICAL FITTERS: Exp. in handling maint. of various kinds of conveyors like, chain conveyor, belt conveyor, bucket elevators, screw conveyor. Should also have knowledge of maintenance of rotary packer, bag filter, reciprocating compressor, screw compressor, air compressors of various sizes & other equipment in cement industry.
- ELECTRICIANS: ITI / Diploma, with 8-10 yrs working in cement industry having exp. in carrying out maintenance, trouble shooting, rectifying HV, MV & LV Panels, Circuit Breakers, Transformers, Electronic Soft Starters, Control Panels & Variable Voltage & Variable Frequency & DC Drives.
- SALES EXECUTIVE: Diploma/BE Mechanical 4-8 yrs exp. in sales of industrial tools.
- SALES CO-ORDINATOR: Any graduate min. 5 yrs exp. in sales of industrial tools. Ensuring the adequacy of sales-related equipment or material.
- OFFICE CLEANER: Minimum 10 th or 12 th passed with English knowledge
- CYLINDRICAL HEAVY GRINDING OPERATORS
- MANUAL MILLING OPTRS: 5-10 yrs exp in gear cutting spiral milling using

Interested candidates Contact / Apply at

Call us and WhatsApp: 88503 50295 / 70210 24010

Email: traveltogetglobal@gmail.com / emailtogetglobal@gmail.com



# The Access

## AAT News Service

**T**HE tourism and hospitality that was hit really bad during the Covid-19 pandemic appears to have come alive with travellers packing their bags and setting out for new pastures after a prolonged lull. While this is true across the world, the trend is visible even in India where there are many people holidaying and spending big on five-star hotels and booking business-class seats as though making up for the lost time.

Almost all travel agencies are reporting that enquiries for travel and hotels have increased significantly during the past six months, more so after the Omicron wave. "People want to make up for lost time," is the general retort of travel agencies.

They are all expecting a busy time during 2022. The potential customers have stated their desire to travel in the current year greater than ever before. To quote one travel agency: "Travel came roaring back. Even in the face of Omicron, travellers are booking more experiences than at this time in pre-pandemic 2019."

The question is, is the industry ready? While news of a business boom could be music to the beleaguered travel industry's ears, it could be problematic if it happens too quickly. The speed and force of demand could catch some travel industry players off guard, industry fears.

Many in the travel and hospitality industry lost their jobs during the pandemic. Many of them switched sectors and seem to have established in other sectors. So rehiring staff may be a problem for many companies.

To let the statistics tell the story, some 62 million travel-related jobs were lost in 2020, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council. While many of these jobs are now returning, many former employees aren't rushing back to their old roles. Many are unwilling to take front-

line positions in an era of rising customer anger and aggressive behaviour.

With the Indian government resuming international flight operations after almost two years since last week, one can expect a spike in international travel as well. On March 23, 2020, the Central government suspended flight operations due to the entry

as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. India has an air bubble agreement with 35 countries.

As many as 60 airlines from 40 countries have been permitted to operate 1,783 frequencies to and from India during the summer schedule. The summer schedule will be effective till October 29, 2022, according to the

also announced plans about their services to and from India.

The Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in the national capital, which is also the country's largest airport, expects international flight departures to witness a significant jump. IGIA handled around 1.8 lakh passengers per day during pre-Covid 19 times.

## Happy Times Again For Travel Business



of the Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

And in July 2020, overseas flights became operational under bilateral air bubble arrangements with various countries. Air travel bubbles are temporary arrangements between two countries aimed at restarting commercial passenger services when regular international flights are suspended

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

The DGCA has approved a total of 1,466 international departures for six Indian airline companies for the summer schedule. The airlines will operate to 43 destinations in 27 countries. Besides, various foreign airlines, including Emirates, Virgin Atlantic, and LOT Polish have

Among the foreign airlines, Emirates (which has the biggest operations in India) will operate 170 flights a week. Air Arabia will operate 140 flights. US-based carriers, United Airlines and American Airlines will operate 28 flights and 7 flights every week, respectively.

On the other hand, European airlines, such as British Airways



**Indians are packing their bags and spending big on travel and tourism, reviving an industry hit hard by the pandemic two years ago**

will operate 49 departures, German carrier Lufthansa will operate 32 flights, and Air France will operate 20 flights per week.

SriLankan Airlines will fly 128 flights, Oman Air 115 flights, Singapore Airlines 65 flights, and Malaysia Airlines 30 flights per week. Thailand-based Thai Airways and Thai Smile will operate 36 and 21 flights every week, respectively.

The government has also revised the Covid-19 guidelines for international flight operations, including the removal of the requirement to keep three seats vacant on overseas flights for medical emergencies. Besides, the requirement for the crew to have a complete PPE kit has

been done away with.

The international scene is also positive. According to a report, nearly 2.1 million people walked through US airport security checkpoints in one of the days of last week, outpacing the same day in pre-pandemic 2019 for the first time in months, as holiday travel surges despite rising Covid-19 cases and fears of a fast-moving new coronavirus variant.

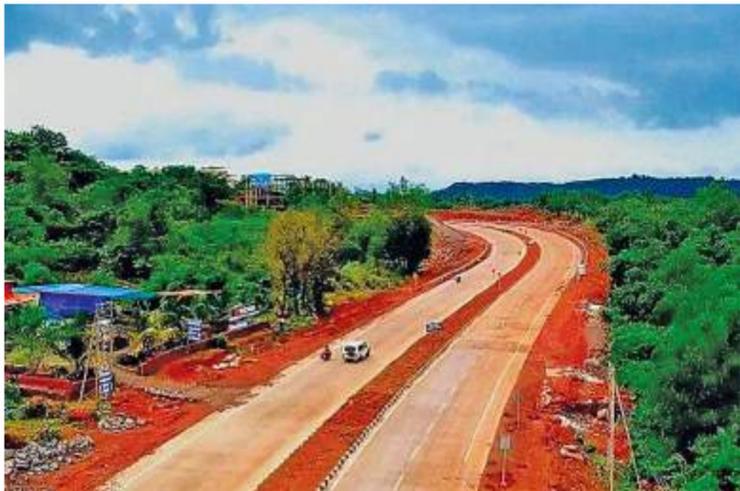
Air travel volumes have typically lingered well below pre-Covid 19 levels this year, but they've narrowly surpassed 2019 on three other occasions, including a day in late August (up 0.7 per cent from 2019) and two days preceding July 4 (up 0.6

per cent and 2.8 per cent). This is the statistics from America.

Now to recall the situation almost two years ago, it would be really worrying. Air travel volume had plummeted after the coronavirus began ravaging the US leaving airlines in dire financial straits. There was some 96 per cent drop in passengers.

To conclude, it has to be said that we are not out of the woods yet. There are talks of a fourth wave a few months down the line. But it appears that people are prepared and they do not seem to worry much about its possible fatalities. So if the trend continues, it could be happy times again for the travel and tourism industry.

## Mumbai-Goa highway to be completed by 2023



### AAT News Service

**T**HE work on Mumbai-Goa highway is underway in 11 phases and will be completed within the next one year. Mumbai-Goa is the heartbeat of the Konkan region. This highway now exists not only to Mumbai-Goa, but it has been extended to Mangalore, said Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways.

Inaugurating three national highway projects worth ₹ 131.87 crore and 42 kms of roads worth ₹ 430 crore in Raigad district, Maharashtra, Mr Gadkari said "if the government land becomes available on the Mumbai-Goa highway, we will help

set up a logistics park and truck terminal."

Regarding the employment opportunities for nearly 1.5 lakh youth of Konkan region, the minister said, "in the last seven years, JNPT (Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust) has done development work worth ₹ 1 lakh crore. The special economic zone in JNPT now has 24 companies operating from there since its launch in 2016 at a cost of ₹ 570 crore. An investment of ₹ 60,000 crore will come soon through this channel.

"Maharashtra, especially the Konkan region has a rich heritage of forts. Therefore, we will fulfill all the proposals for ropeways in the state regarding forts. We have Austrian Duffelware

technology available for ropeways, which can be used in the state. In the near future light and sound shows could also be arranged at all the forts to attract more tourists."

As a part of this development, temples such as Harihareshwar Temple and Diveagar Golden Temple; Murud-Janjira and Padmadurg forts; and Shrivardhan and Diveagar beaches have good road connectivity now. The highway, catering to transportation of heavy vehicles to Dighi Port, provides connectivity for areas of tourism industry in the vicinity around the Konkan belt in Raigad and is also the only one road connecting existing Mumbai-Goa highway (NH-66) to Dighi Port, added Mr Gadkari.

### AAT News Service

**I**N a breakthrough achievement, the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) has indigenously developed six new and rare reference materials (RMs) which is the purest form of chemical required for anti-doping analysis in all World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)-accredited laboratories across the world.

Launching the RMs during the 15<sup>th</sup> Governing Body Meeting of NDTL, Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur said, the RMs have been developed in less than a year by NDTL in association with the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), Guwahati and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM), Jammu.

Speaking about the achievement, Mr Thakur said, "with the creation of these RMs, NDTL has earned itself the recognition of being one of the few labs in the world where such RMs have been developed. Scientists of the three institutions have worked tirelessly to create these RMs, which are not readily available across the world but are needed by every WADA-accredited laboratory for their anti-doping analysis. India, previously dependent on Canada and Australia for these materials, can now export these RMs to other countries. With this scientific development we have taken a step towards an Aatmanirbhar Bharat in the field of anti-doping science."

The availability of these rare RMs will help the entire anti-doping community to strengthen the testing capabilities and usher in an era of mutual co-operation among countries for pro-

moting fair play in sports policy world over. The NDTL signed a memorandum of understanding with both the national scientific organisations in order to indigenously synthesise and

have been undertaken with the active support and funding of the Central government, said the minister.

Out of the six RMs launched, three each were synthesised in

and shared with fellow WADA-accredited laboratories.

The launch of these RMs will ensure improved anti-doping testing which is in line with the Ministry of Sports and Youth Af-

## New Delhi develops rare reference materials to strengthen dope testing

**The availability of the rare reference materials will help the entire anti-doping community to strengthen the testing capabilities and usher in an era of mutual co-operation among countries for promoting fair play in sports policy world over**



develop 20 such RMs of prohibited substances, in a phased manner, over a period of three years. These R&D activities between NDTL & NIPER, Guwahati and CSIR-IIIM, Jammu

collaboration with NIPER, Guwahati and CSIR-IIIM, Jammu. Last year too, scientists of NDTL and NIPER succeeded in synthesising two indigenously-developed rare RMs which were launched

fairs' commitment towards promotion and effective implementation of anti-doping programmes in the country with the sole objective of fair play in sports, added Mr Thakur.



AAT News Service

# Mumbai Int'l Cruise Terminal to be commissioned by July 2024

## Domestic and international cruising to be the main activity

THE Mumbai International Cruise Terminal, the iconic sea cruise terminal coming up at BPX-Indira Dock, is expected to be commissioned by July 2024. The terminal will have a capacity of handling 200 ships and one million passengers per annum. Out of the total project cost of ₹ 495 crore, ₹ 303 crore will be incurred by Mumbai Port Authority and the remaining by private operators, said Rajiv Jalota, Chairman, Mumbai Port Authority.

Addressing the media on the occasion of seventh anniversary of Sagarmala Programme for port-led development of the nation, Mr Jalota said the first-of-its-kind iconic sea cruise terminal in India with a total construction area of 4.15 lakh sqft will have 22 elevators, 10 escalators, and multistoried car parking for 300 cars. Two cruise ships will be able to berth at a time on the dock.

Domestic and international cruising is expected to be the main activity at Mumbai Port in the coming days. The authority will focus on cruise tourism, passenger transportation and ship repair. A cruise conference is being planned to showcase India as a cruise destination, with an aim to establish ports like Mumbai, Goa, Kochi and ports on the east coast as cruise hubs, he said.

Speaking on Kanhoji Angre Lighthouse Development, Mr Jalota said, "with the aim to enhance the scope of cruise tourism and to attract international passengers, we are developing Kanhoji Angre Island under the Lighthouse Tourism Scheme. Mumbai Port has done developmental works worth ₹ 18 crore on the island, which attracts a lot of visitors. The is-



land will have facilities for trekking, sit-outs, viewing galleries, interesting pergolas and resting benches, outdoor restaurants, performances, overnight

camping etc. The scheduled date of commercial operation will be March 2023."

Speaking about the Mallet Bundar Harbour, the Chairman said "the harbour normally handles more than 700 trawlers per day and around 900 trawlers on peak days. This may soon increase to 1,300. We are planning

to develop a fishing harbour to decrease the congestion under the Sagarmala Project. The project is fully funded by Sagarmala and Department of Fisheries to

cater to the increased demand from fishermen community. In addition to these, a third chemical berth being constructed at Pirpau will make a capacity addition of

two million metric tonnes per annum, catering to handle chemicals including LPG."

Sagarmala is an ambitious national initiative aimed at bringing about a step change in India's logistics sector performance, by unlocking the full potential of country's coastline and waterways. The vision of Sagarmala is to reduce logistics costs for both domestic and EXIM (ex-

**The first of its kind iconic sea cruise terminal in India with a total construction area of 4.15 lakh sqft will have 22 elevators, 10 escalators, and multistoried car parking for 300 cars. Two cruise ships will be able to berth at a time on the dock**

port-import) cargos with optimised infrastructure investment. It will lead to overall cost savings of ₹ 40,000 crore per annum, focussing on the concept of port-led development.

The Sagarmala scheme encompasses projects worth ₹ 5.48 lakh crore, out of which 194 projects worth ₹ 99,000 crore have been completed and 217 projects worth ₹ 2.12 lakh crore are under implementation, added Mr Jalota.

## Fashion Corner



## Four film media units merged with NFDC

AAT News Service

THE Ministry of Information and Broadcasting transferred the mandate of production of documentaries and short films, organisation of film festivals and preservation of films to the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), which functions under the ministry.

Stating that the mandate of its four media units – Films Division, Directorate of Film Festivals, National Film Archives of India and Children's Film Society, India – has been transferred to the NFDC, the ministry said bringing all these activities under a single management will reduce the overlap of various activities and ensure better utilisation of

public resources. The mandate of production of feature films is already being carried out by NFDC.

The mandate will give a strong impetus to the production of films of all genres including feature films, documentaries, children film and animation films; promotion of films through participation in different international festivals and organising various domestic festivals; preservation of filmic content, digitisation and restoration of films; and distribution and outreach activities. The ownership of the assets available with these units will, however, remain with the Central government.

According to the orders, the mandate of production of documentaries that was earlier done

by Films Division has been completely transferred to the NFDC. The legacy and brand name of Films Division will be taken further and the production vertical for production of documentaries in the NFDC will be named as Films Division, it said.

Similarly, the organisation of film festivals that was the mandate of Directorate of Film Festivals has been transferred to NFDC. This will bring the organisation of different national and international film festivals under one roof, thereby bringing in more synergy and a focussed international outreach. Some of the major upcoming film festivals to be organised by NFDC are the Mumbai International Film Festival, International Film Festival of India in Goa, and Chil-

dren's Film Festival.

The preservation-related activities that are carried out by National Film Archives of India have also been transferred to NFDC. The National Film Heritage Mission aiming at digitisation and restoration of films and documentaries will now be implemented by NFDC.

Audio-visual service is one of the 12 champion service sectors identified by Department of Commerce. Financial incentives for audio-visual co-productions with foreign countries and for promotion of shooting of foreign films in India have also been approved by the Central government. This will also be spearheaded by the NFDC through its Film Facilitation Office, said the ministry.

The Central government has made a budgetary allocation of ₹ 1,304 crore for all these activities, which will be implemented through NFDC. In order to further strengthen NFDC, it has been decided that the revenues generated by these activities will also accrue to NFDC.

In December 2020, the Union Cabinet decided to merge four of its film media units with NFDC by expanding the Memorandum of Articles of Association, added the ministry.

Readers are advised to make appropriate enquiries before entering into any commitment or making payments in relation to any advertisement published in this paper. Assignments Abroad Times shall not be held responsible for any consequences thereon.

Publisher

