

International

Russia's Visa-Free Entry for Indians from 2025



About News:-

- ❖ Indian travellers could soon visit Russia without a visa, with the arrangement expected to take effect as early as spring 2025.
- ❖ In June, talks between India and Russia centred around a bilateral agreement to simplify visa requirements, particularly through a visa-free group tourist exchange program.

Key Points:-

- ❖ Currently, obtaining a Russian visa requires careful planning and paperwork. Indian travellers typically apply for various visa categories, such as tourist, business, work, student, private, or humanitarian, depending on their travel purpose.
- ❖ Evgeny Kozlov, Chairman of the Moscow City Tourism Committee, shared that Moscow welcomed 28,500 Indian visitors in the first half of 2024, marking a 1.5-fold increase compared to the previous year. Most of these travellers visit for business or work-related purposes.
- ❖ Russia already has a successful visa-free tourist exchange program with China and Iran, launched on August 1, 2023. Encouraged by its success, Russia is keen to extend a similar initiative to Indian tourists.

Indian passport privileges

- ❖ Indian passport holders already enjoy visa-free access to 62 countries, and this potential visa-free agreement with Russia will further expand their global travel opportunities.

- ❖ With its strategic push to simplify travel, Russia aims to boost tourism from India, one of its fastest-growing markets, and strengthen cultural and economic ties between the two nations.

About Russia:-

- ❖ Capital:- Moscow
- ❖ Currency:- Ruble
- ❖ President :- Vladimir Putin
- ❖ Prime Minister:- Mikhail Mishustin

National

Vice President Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar Inaugurates GSI Geoscience Museum in Gwalior

About News:-

- ❖ The Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, inaugurated the state-of-the-art Geological Survey of India (GSI) Geoscience Museum at the Victoria Market Building in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh today (15 Dec 2024) by ribbon cutting and unveiling of the plaque.
- ❖ The event marked a remarkable celebration, seamlessly blending the grandeur of tradition with the marvels of modern innovation.



Key Points:-

- ❖ The Gwalior Geoscience Museum serves as a gateway to the wonders of Earth's story a sanctuary of knowledge where science and art converge to inspire curiosity. It houses two exceptional galleries, offering a glimpse into the mysteries of our planet and the chronicles of life's journey through time.
- ❖ Gallery I, titled Planet Earth: Its Uniqueness in Diversity, showcases Earth's marvels across seven sections, highlighting phenomena such as volcanoes, meteorites,

and magnetic fields. With cutting-edge multimedia displays, interactive models, digital storyboards, and rare geological specimens, this gallery transforms into a vibrant platform where science comes alive. It features extraordinary treasures, including Antarctic rocks, rare gemstones, volcanic rocks from Japan, Himalayan fossils, Deccan Trap zeolites, dimensional stones, and dinosaur eggs, making it a rich feast for both intellect and imagination.

- ❖ Gallery II titled Evolution of Life on Earth, chronicles the epic story of life, tracing its origins to the rise of Homo sapiens. Through seven meticulously designed sections, visitors explore ancient ecosystems, the process of evolution, and mass extinction events. Fossils and immersive exhibits foster scientific curiosity, offering a deeper understanding of our past and a vision for the future.

State

Uttarakhand aims to become the first state with a dedicated yoga policy



About News:-

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami announced on Thursday that the state govt is working to implement the nation's first yoga policy.

Key Points:-

- ❖ The aim of the policy is to "integrate Ayurveda and yoga on a large scale, heralding a new revolution in the field of health," Dhami said while speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the 10th World Ayurveda Congress (WAC) and Arogya Expo held at Dehradun's Parade Ground.

- ❖ He said it was a "matter of pride" that Uttarakhand is hosting delegates from 50 countries and over 3,000 experts at the event.
- ❖ The CM revealed plans to establish 'Ayush Grams' in each district to promote wellness, education, research, and the production of medicinal plants. He added that the state also plans to launch Ayush teleconsultation services and 50 new yoga and wellness centers.

About Uttarakhand:-

- ❖ Capital:- Dehradun
- ❖ Governor :- Gurmit Singh
- ❖ Chief minister:- Pushkar Singh Dhami

Economic

Government launches Rs 1,000-cr credit guarantee scheme to help farmers access post-harvest loans

About News:-

- ❖ The Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and New & Renewable Energy, Shri Pralhad Joshi launched the Credit Guarantee Scheme for e-NWR-based Pledge Financing (CGS-NPF) in New Delhi on 6 December 2024.
- ❖ This scheme provides a corpus of Rs 1,000 crore for post-harvest finance availed by farmers against electronic negotiable warehouse receipts (e-NWRs) after depositing commodities in Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) accredited warehouses.



Salient features of the Credit Guarantee Scheme for e-NWR-based pledge Finance (CGS-NPF) are as follows:

- ❖ Total Corpus:- Rs. 1000 Crores

- ❖ Coverage:- Loans up to Rs. 75 lakhs for agricultural purposes and Loans up to Rs. 200 Lakhs for nonagricultural purposes.
- ❖ Eligible Institutions:- All scheduled banks and all cooperative banks
- ❖ Eligible Borrowers:- Small and Marginal Farmer (SMF)/ Women/SC/ST/PwD Farmers, other farmers, MSMEs, Traders, FPOs and Farmer cooperatives.
- ❖ Risks covered:- Credit and warehouseman risk
- ❖ Guarantee Fee:- 0.4% p.a. for farmers and 1% p.a. for non-farmers
- ❖ Guarantee coverage:- 85% for loans up to Rs. 3L and 80% for loans between 3 to 75 lakhs for small and marginal farmers/women/SC/ST/PwD and 75% for other borrowers.

Science & Technology

ISRO successfully tests CE20 cryogenic engine, paves way for Gaganyaan mission

About News:-

ISRO achieved a significant milestone with the sea-level hot test of the CE20 cryogenic engine, conducted at the ISRO Propulsion Complex, Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu.



About CE20 Cryogenic Engine

- ❖ The CE20 cryogenic engine is a rocket engine that uses liquefied gases as both fuel and oxidizer.
- ❖ These gases are kept at extremely low temperatures to maintain their liquid state.
- ❖ Developed by the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre, the CE20 engine powers the upper stage of the Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM-3)

Fuel and Oxidizer Used

- ❖ Liquid Oxygen (LOX): Acts as the oxidizer. It liquefies at -183°C .
- ❖ Liquid Hydrogen (LH₂): Serves as the fuel which liquefies at -253°C .

- ❖ The reaction between LOX and LH₂ generates thrust for propulsion.

Features

- ❖ Engine Restart Capability: Equipped with a multi-element igniter, enabling the engine to restart mid-mission, crucial for missions like Gaganyaan.
- ❖ This test validated ISRO's ability to perform vacuum ignition without nozzle closure, advancing its cryogenic propulsion capabilities.
- ❖ Nozzle Protection System: Prevents flow separation in the nozzle and reduces vibrations enhancing performance and simplifying testing procedures.
- ❖ High Efficiency: Provides increased thrust and enhances payload capacity.
- ❖ Applications: Primarily used in the upper stages of rockets, where high efficiency is essential for placing satellites or spacecraft into orbit.
- ❖ The engine, initially qualified for 19 tonnes of thrust, has been upgraded to:
- ❖ 20 tonnes for the Gaganyaan mission, India's first manned spaceflight.
- ❖ 22 tonnes for the C32 stage, enhancing the payload capacity of the LVM3 rocket.

About ISRO:-

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

- ❖ Headquarters:- Bengaluru, Karnataka
- ❖ Chairman :- S. Somanath

Defence

Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya and Indian Navy sign MoU for Logistics related Education, Research and Training



About News:-

- ❖ Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya, Vadodara has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Navy in New Delhi today. The MoU aims to enhance logistics-related education, research, and training for the Indian Navy.
- ❖ The agreement, signed by Vice Admiral Deepak Kapoor (Controller of Logistics, Indian Navy) and Prof. Manoj Choudhary (Vice-Chancellor, Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya), represents a major milestone in bolstering India Navy's logistics capabilities and operational efficiency.

Key Points:-

- ❖ The collaboration is set to strengthen the Indian Navy's logistical framework by focusing on supply chain management, multimodal transportation, and sustainability in logistics. It also aligns with national development initiatives such as the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan 2021 and the National Logistics Policy 2022.
- ❖ The MoU facilitates the exchange of expertise and case studies in areas such as AI applications, predictive analytics, and blockchain technology to elevate logistics practices. A specified number of Indian Navy officers will also have the opportunity to pursue academic degrees at Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV), alongside management development programs designed exclusively for them.
- ❖ Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya, established in 2022 as a central university under the Ministry of Railways, is dedicated to creating world-class talent in the logistics and transportation sectors. With Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting, and Electronics & IT, as its first Chancellor, the institution continues to lead the way in addressing India's logistics challenges.

Award

546 artists perform together, set Guinness World Record for 'largest Hindustani classical band'



About News:-

A Guinness World Record for the "largest Hindustani classical band" was set on Sunday at Gwalior Fort in Madhya Pradesh when 546 artists performed various ragas on nine instruments.

Key Points:-

- ❖ The performance was part of the 100th International Tansen Samaroh which pays tribute to the legendary 16th-century singer believed to have brought down the rains with his rendition of Megh Malhar.
- ❖ The 546 artists comprised 347 males and 189 females and the performance was based on Malhar, Miyan ki Todi, and Darbari Kanhra, three ragas composed by Tansen.
- ❖ Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, who received the certificate from an official of the Guinness World Records, hailed the musicians for the feat.
- ❖ Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and assembly speaker Narendra Singh Tomar were among those who attended the event,

Sport

Manika Batra's Team Asia wins the inaugural Waldner Cup 2024 in Oslo



About News:-

- ❖ Team Asia, featuring star Indian paddler Manika Batra, clinched the inaugural edition of the Waldner Cup 2024 table tennis tournament, defeating Team World 14-10 in Oslo, Norway.
- ❖ The Waldner Cup was held in Oslo, Norway, from 13-15 December 2024.

- ❖ Team Asia included six-time Olympic gold medallist Ma Long, Paris 2024 Olympic singles champion Chen Meng of China, two-time Olympic bronze medallist Shin Yubin of South Korea, Kazakhstan's Kirill Gerassimenko, and India's Manika Batra.

Key Points:-

- ❖ The Waldner Cup was a two-day event featuring male and female players competing in singles, doubles, and mixed doubles matches. The scoring system awarded one point per win on the first day and two points per win on the second.
- ❖ On the opening day, Manika Batra teamed up with Shin Yubin but lost to Puerto Rican Adriana Diaz and Romania's Bernadette Szocs, with a 2-1 scoreline. On the second day, world No. 25 Manika faced world No. 16 Adriana Diaz and lost 2-0.
- ❖ Team World was led by Sweden's Paris 2024 men's singles silver medallist Truls Moregardh and Germany's six-time Olympic medallist Dimitrij Ovtcharov, with Brazil's Hugo Calderano completing the lineup.

Obituary

Tulsi Gowda, the "Encyclopedia of Forests," passed away at 86



About News:-

- ❖ 'Vriksha Mata' Tulsi Gowda, renowned for her environmental contributions, has passed away at the age of 86.
- ❖ Gowda, a member of the Halakki community, who was suffering from age-related ailments, breathed her last today (December 16) at her residence in Honnali village in Ankola taluk of Uttara Kannada district.

Who was Tulsi Gowda?

- ❖ Tulsi Gowda was born in Honnali village of Karnataka's Ankola Taluk. She was a member of the indigenous Halakki tribe.

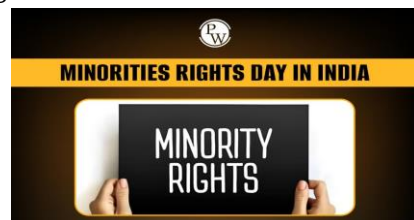
- ❖ For 30 years, Tulsi Gowda was a temporary volunteer in the forest department. She was then offered a permanent job due to her dedication to preserving nature and retired from the department at 70.
- ❖ Tulsi Gowda never received any formal education, yet her knowledge made her famous as the "Encyclopedia of the Forest."
- ❖ Tulsi Gowda worked for the cause of the environment for more than 60 years and planted over 30,000 saplings.
- ❖ In 2021, the Government of India honoured Tulsi Gowda with the Padma Shri, the country's fourth-highest civilian award.

Important Day

Minorities Rights Day in India 2024

About News:-

- ❖ Minorities Rights Day in India is observed every year on 18th December to promote and protect the rights of minority communities. It is an opportunity to reflect on the constitutional safeguards provided to minorities and assess their efforts to address their concerns.
- ❖ Minorities Rights Day 2024 focuses on creating awareness about the challenges minorities face and emphasising the need for inclusive development. The theme for Minorities Rights Day in India 2024 will be announced soon.
- ❖ The theme for Minorities Rights Day 2024 is "Promoting Diversity and Protecting Rights."



History:-

- ❖ Minorities Rights Day in India was first observed in 2013. This day was established following the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities in 1992. This

declaration emphasised the protection of minorities' identities and their equal rights to participate in public and cultural life.

- ❖ While there is no internationally agreed definition of minorities, according to the United Nations, a minority group is defined as a community that lacks social, political, and economic dominance and is numerically inferior within a specific country. India adopted the global commitment to protect minorities by marking 18th December as Minorities Rights Day. Over the years, this day has become a symbol of the nation's dedication to upholding minority rights.



**MPSC
WALLAH**

