

UK makes ETA must from Feb 25, 2026

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■ **By Aditi Khanna**

LONDON, Nov 24 (PTI)

INTERNATIONAL visitors from countries so far visa-exempt will not be able to travel to the UK without advance permission in the form of an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) under new rules announced by the government on Monday.

Visitors from 85 nationalities, including the United States, Canada, and France, who have thus far not needed advance clearance, must apply online for an ETA from February 25, 2026, before entry to the UK. Indians already require visas across different categories when travelling to the UK and will be unaffected by this particular change.

"ETAs give us greater power to stop those who pose a threat from setting foot in the country and gives us a fuller picture of immigration," said Mike Tapp, UK's Minister for Migration and Citizenship. "ETAs are also better for travellers. Digitising the immigration system ensures the millions of people we welcome to the UK every year enjoy a more seamless travel experience," he said. The UK Home Office said this marks a "significant step" towards digitising the country's immigration system and paves the way for a contactless UK border in the future. Enforcing the new rules will mean that everyone who wants to come to the UK must have digital permission



through either an ETA or an eVisa. All aircraft carriers will be required to check people have the requisite documentation before they board.

"Since the launch of ETA in October 2023, more than 13.3 million visitors have successfully applied and benefited from faster, smoother travel. ETA is now a fundamental part of travel, including for visitors who take connecting flights and go through UK passport control," the Home Office said.

As part of a wider ETA rollout, it was not being strictly enforced to give travellers time to adjust to the new requirement – in line with the approach other countries such as the US and Canada took for similar travel schemes.

The Home Office claims that applying for an ETA is "quick and simple" through the official UK ETA app, and the cost has been set at GBP 16. While most people currently get a decision automatically in minutes, the government recommends travellers allow three working days to account for the small number of cases that require additional review. British and Irish citizens, including dual citizens, are exempt from needing an ETA.

"The UK strongly advises dual British citizens to make sure they have a valid British passport or certificate of entitlement, to avoid problems like being denied boarding when travelling to the UK from 25 February 2026," the Home Office cautioned.

PM Modi meets Meloni in S Africa

India, Italy announce united initiative for combating financing of terrorism

JOHANNESBURG, Nov 23 (PTI)

INDIA and Italy on Sunday announced a joint initiative for cooperation in combating financing of terrorism, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni here and discussed ways to bolster bilateral ties in several areas, including trade, defence and security. During the meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Johannesburg, the two leaders adopted the India-Italy Joint Initiative to Counter Financing of Terrorism, which reiterates their common resolve to fight terrorism.

“Had a very good meeting with Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. The India-Italy Strategic Partnership is growing from strength to strength, greatly ben-



efitting the people of our nations,” Modi said in a post on social media after the meeting.

“India and Italy are announcing a Joint Initiative for cooperation in combating financing of terrorism. This is a necessary and timely effort, which will strengthen humanity’s fight against ter-

rorism and its support networks,” Modi said. Prime Minister Meloni expressed solidarity with India on the terror incident in Delhi and reiterated Italy’s strong commitment to working together to combat the scourge of terrorism. Modi said he also discussed further advancing bilateral cooperation in sectors such as trade, investment, defence, innovation, AI, space and education.

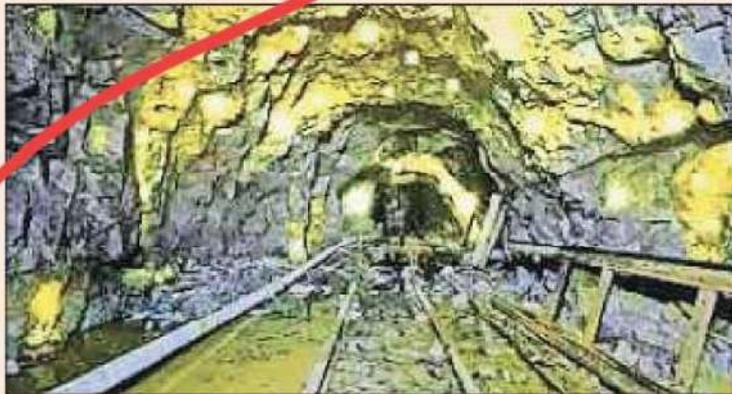
The two leaders had interacted briefly on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Kananaskis, Canada, earlier in June this year. **CANADIAN PM CARNEY TO VISIT INDIA NEXT YEAR: CANADIAN** Prime Minister Mark Carney accepted Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s invitation to visit India following bilateral talks between the two leaders on the sidelines of the G20 summit in South Africa.

Afghanistan offers 5-year tax exemption to Indian investors in gold mining, new sectors

NEW DELHI, Nov 24 (PTI)

SEEKING investments in a range of sectors, Afghanistan Industry and Commerce Minister Alhaj Nooruddin Azizi on Monday said his Government is ready to offer five years of tax breaks to firms investing in new sectors, including gold mining.

Speaking at an interactive session organised by business chamber Assocham, Azizi said tensions with Pakistan creating hurdles in trade. "There is a huge potential available in Afghanistan. Even you will not find a lot of competitors. You will also receive tariff support, and we will be able to give you land. The five-year tax exemption will



be given to companies who may be interested to invest in new sectors," the Minister said. Afghanistan will charge only 1 per cent tariff if Indian firms import machinery for investment, he said.

"Gold mining will definitely require the technical and professional team or professional companies. So initially, we are requesting that you send your team, they can do the research, they can do the exploration ini-

tially, and then they can start work.

"However, the condition is that we will expect it to be processed in the country so jobs can be created," the Minister said. The visiting Minister urged the Indian side to remove "minor" hurdles to boost bilateral trade.

"We want to build the relationship between India and Afghanistan. There are some minor hurdles which really affect the overall process, like visa, air corridor, banking transactions. So these have to be sorted to improve bilateral trade and investment," he said in the presence of Indian Government officials.

INDIA, CANADA AGREE TO resume FTA talks: Goyal

NEW DELHI, Nov 24 (PTI)

INDIA and Canada have agreed to resume negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with an aim to increase the two-way trade to USD 50 billion by 2030, according to Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. An FTA or Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) has many strategic elements to it and it is a demonstration of the trust between the two countries, Goyal said here at an event on Monday.

The pact would give confidence to investors, businesses of both sides, he said.

“We have agreed to begin negotiations on a high-ambition CEPA and double the trade between the two nations by 2030,” he said, adding the two countries are natural allies and do not compete

with each other. The strengths of India and Canada can become a force multiplier for businesses and investors, Goyal said.

“There is a lot that we can learn from Canada and a lot we can offer Canada. There is a lot of potential on critical minerals, critical minerals processing technologies. There is a good possibility on nuclear energy



particularly with our engagement with Canada on Uranium supplies,” he said, adding, “we can diversify our supply chains on both sides”. In 2023, Canada had paused negotiations for an FTA with India. The India-Canada relationship hit rock bottom following then Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s allegations in 2023 of a potential Indian link to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. India had dismissed Trudeau’s accusation as “absurd”.

Justice Surya Kant takes oath as 53rd CJI; to remain in office for nearly 15 months



President Droupadi Murmu administers the oath of office to Justice Surya Kant as the 53rd Chief Justice of India during a ceremony, at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Nov 24 (PTI)

JUSTICE Surya Kant, who has been part of several landmark verdicts, including on abrogation of Article 370 removing Jammu and Kashmir's special status and Bihar electoral rolls revision, took oath as the 53rd Chief Justice of India on Monday.

He succeeds Justice B R Gavai. President Droupadi Murmu

administered the oath to Justice Kant at a brief ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

He took the oath in Hindi in the name of God.

Justice Kant was appointed as the next CJI on October 30 and will remain in the post for nearly 15 months. He will demit office on February 9, 2027 on attaining the age of 65 years. Vice President C P Radhakrishnan and

Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among the senior leaders who attended the ceremony.

Soon after being sworn in, Justice Kant went up to Prime Minister Modi to greet him.

Later, in a post on X, Modi shared pictures of the swearing in ceremony.

"Attended the oath taking ceremony of Justice Surya Kant as
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Anti-Submarine Warfare Vessel

INS Mahe commissioned to boost coastal defence

MUMBAI, Nov 24 (PTI)

THE Indian Navy on Monday commissioned INS Mahe, the first of the Mahe-class anti-submarine warfare shallow-water craft, which will form the first line of coastal defence, integrating seamlessly with larger surface combatants, submarines, and aviation assets.

Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi was the chief guest here at the commissioning ceremony of INS Mahe, marking the new generation of indigenous shallow-water combatants - sleek, swift and resolutely Indian.

INS Mahe's commissioning not
(Contd on page 5)



A view of INS Mahe, the first Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC) ahead of its commissioning, at the Naval Dockyard, in Mumbai on Monday. (PTI)