

# India, China bear brunt of Trump's tougher visa policies: report

WASHINGTON, MAR 23

India and China bore the maximum brunt of tougher immigration policy unveiled by the Trump administration which issued 2.5 lakh fewer visas in the first eight months of 2025 compared with the same period in 2024, according to a media report. From January to August 2025, the State Department approved 11 per cent fewer permanent resident and temporary visas compared with the same period a year before, according to State Department data released in early March.

These visas are generally issued for students, workers, and family members of citizens and legal residents. The 11 per cent drop doesn't include tourist visas, which also fell during the same period, the Washington Post reported on Sunday.

According to the report, visas for Chinese and Indian nationals fell by about 84,000 compared with the same period in 2024, largely reflecting a drop-off in international students and workers from those countries. Business and tourism visas declined by about 3.4 per cent



in the first eight months of 2025 compared with that period a year earlier, a drop of nearly two lakh visas.

Between January and August 2024, the US had issued more than 3.44 lakh student visas, the number declined to a little over 2.38 lakh during the same period in 2025.

The family preference visa, which includes adult children and siblings of US citizens fell by more than 27

per cent or by over 44,000. The visas issued to sea and airline workers also reduced by 30,876, while those issued for culture exchange visitors declined by 29,594.

The visas issued to fiance/spouse declined from 37,229 in the first eight months of 2024 to 18,894 for the period under review in 2025. White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said in a statement that "President

Trump was elected with a resounding mandate to put American citizens first and every policy decision he's made has reflected that priority." In a statement to The Washington Post, State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott said: "A visa is a privilege, not a right. Unlike the Biden administration, President Trump is not willing to compromise the safety of American citizens to allow mass migration of unvetted foreign nationals into our country." The visas issued to fiance/spouse declined from 37,229 in the first eight months of 2024 to 18,894 for the period under review in 2025. White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said in a statement that "President Trump was elected with a resounding mandate to put American citizens first and every policy decision he's made has reflected that priority." In a statement to The Washington Post, State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott said: "A visa is a privilege, not a right. Unlike the Biden administration, President Trump is not willing to compromise the safety of American citizens to allow mass migration of unvetted .

# Indian national injured by falling debris after missile incident in Abu Dhabi

DUBAI, MAR 23

An Indian national has sustained minor injury in Abu Dhabi after the debris of a ballistic missile fell in the Al Shawamekh area following successful interception, authorities said on Monday. Emergency teams responded to the scene after air defence systems dealt with the incoming missile, with debris landing in a residential area, authorities added. "Relevant authorities in Abu Dhabi have responded to an incident involving debris falling in the Al Shawamekh area following the successful interception of a ballistic missile by air defence systems. The incident resulted in a minor injury to an Indian national," the Abu Dhabi media Office said in a post on X. "The public is reminded to obtain information from official sources only and avoid spreading rumours or unverified information," it added. A total of 161 people were also injured, with injuries ranging from minor to moderate and severe, Gulf News reported. The injured included nationals of the UAE, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Iran, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Azerbaijan, Yemen, Uganda, Eritrea, Lebanon, Afghanistan,

Bahrain, Comoros, Turkiye, Iraq, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Jordan, Palestine, Ghana, Indonesia, Sweden and Tunisia, it said. Starting February 28, the US and Israel launched a joint attack on Iran, which came after days of build-up with US President Donald Trump ramping up the pressure on Tehran to agree to a new deal on its nuclear programme. Iran's retaliation escalated the war to the entire Gulf region. An Indian national has sustained minor injury in Abu Dhabi after the debris of a ballistic missile fell in the Al Shawamekh area following successful interception, authorities said on Monday. Emergency teams responded to the scene after air defence systems dealt with the incoming missile, with debris landing in a residential area, authorities added. "Relevant authorities in Abu Dhabi have responded to an incident involving debris falling in the Al Shawamekh area following the successful interception of a ballistic missile by air defence systems. The incident resulted in a minor injury to an Indian national," the Abu Dhabi media Office said in a post on X. "The public is reminded to obtain information from official sources only and avoid spreading rumours or unverified information," it added. A total of 161 people were also injured, with injuries ranging from minor to moderate and severe, Gulf News reported. The injured included nationals of the UAE, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Iran, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Azerbaijan, Yemen, Uganda, Eritrea, Lebanon, Afghanistan,

# Iran issues indirect threat as its media list Mideast electrical, water stations

DUBAI, MAR 23

After Iran threatened power plants across the Mideast, news outlets published a list of such facilities, including the United Arab Emirates' nuclear power plant. The report by the semi-official Fars news agency, close to its

paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, appeared to be an indirect threat to the sites, including desalination plants in the Middle East.

The list also included the UAE's Barakah nuclear power plant, which has four reactors out in the western deserts of the

country near its border with Saudi Arabia. The judiciary's Mizan news agency also published the list. The threat by Tehran puts at risk both electrical supplies and water in the Gulf Arab states, particularly as the desert nations commingle their power stations with desali-

nation plants crucial for supplying drinking water. Trump's self-declared 48-hour deadline expires just before midnight GMT Tuesday, further raising the stakes of the ongoing war with Iran that has disrupted global energy supplies, sending natural gas and gasoline prices soaring.

# Strait of Hormuz open to friendly nations: Iran's envoy to Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, MAR 23

The Strait of Hormuz remains open to friendly countries, the Iranian envoy to Sri Lanka said on Monday, stressing that Tehran is ready to supply oil or other essential goods to the island nation if the need arises. The conflict in West Asia, involving the US, Israel, and Iran, has led to the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, a key shipping route through which 20 per cent of the world's energy is transported. Iran, which controls the Strait of Hormuz, has allowed very few ships to cross it since the conflict started on February 28.

Addressing a press conference here, Iran's Ambassador to Sri Lanka Alireza Delkhosh said that the key strait remains open to friendly country vessels to pass. "Sri Lanka is our friendly country and as I

told you, Hormuz is not closed to our friends like Sri Lanka," he said. "If Sri Lanka demands oil or any other necessary goods, Iran will supply," he added. The conflict, which has roiled global oil markets, entered its fourth week, coinciding with which, the Sri Lankan government hiked fuel prices by 25 per cent on Sunday.

It was the third fuel price hike by the government since March 1. Speaking about an Iranian vessel which was torpedoed and sunk in international waters off Sri Lanka's coast by a US submarine earlier this month, the envoy said it was "not here for war". "Dena was not ready for war. It was not here for conflict. It was participating in a peaceful exercise in India," he said, calling the targeting a violation of humanitarian law. The

Iranian warship IRIS Dena was returning after participating in the Milan naval exercise, a multilateral wargame hosted by India, when it was struck. At least 87 Iranian sailors were killed in the attack. Delkhosh said that the Sri Lankan government had invited the three Iranian vessels involved in the Milan exercise to visit the island nation.

"This vessel, with two other vessels, was invited by the Sri Lankan side to come here. And they came here upon their invitation," he said. Delkhosh expressed gratitude to Sri Lanka for accommodating over 200 sailors from another vessel, IRIS Bushehr, whom the ambassador said were mainly cadets. It was allowed to dock by Sri Lanka at its eastern port of Trincomalee, after seeking permission.

# Iran threatens to start hitting Gulf power plants as Israel launches new wave of attacks

DUBAI, MAR 23

Iran's Defence Council threatened Monday to deploy naval mines across the "entire Persian Gulf" if a land invasion happens. The council issued the statement as concern in Tehran grows about the potential arrival of US Marines to the region. "Any attempt by the enemy to target Iran's coasts or islands will, naturally and in accordance with established military practice, lead to the mining of all access routes ... in the Persian Gulf and along the coasts," the council said.

The US has been trying to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, to energy shipments. The Marines could come ashore to seize either islands or territory in Iran to support that mission. Israel also has suggested a ground operation could take part in the war. The US has been trying to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, to energy shipments. The Marines could come ashore to seize either islands or territory in Iran to support that mission. Israel also has suggested a ground operation could take part in the war.

# 2 people killed in collision between jet and vehicle at New York's LaGuardia Airport, source says

NEW YORK, MAR 23

An Air Canada regional jet struck a firetruck on the runway after landing at New York's LaGuardia Airport late Sunday, crushing the nose of the plane, according to authorities and photos of the wreckage. Two people were killed, according to a person familiar with the investigation into the crash. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss an active investigation.

There were 72 passengers and four crew members aboard the aircraft, a Jazz Aviation flight operating on behalf of Air Canada, according to a statement from the airline. The flight originated at Montréal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport, the major airport serving Montreal. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey said in a statement that the jet had struck a rescue and fire-



fighting vehicle that was responding to a separate incident at about 11:45 p.m. The airport was closed as of 3 am to facilitate the investigation, officials said. Photos and videos from the scene showed severe damage to the front of the aircraft, with cables and debris hanging from a mangled cockpit. Nearby, a damaged emergency vehicle lay on its side. Stairways used to evacuate passengers from aircraft were pushed up to the emer-

gency exits on the jet, a Bombardier CRJ. The impact left the jet with its crumpled nose tilted upward. Jazz Aviation issued a statement confirming the accident and noting the passenger and crew list was preliminary and subject to confirmation. The National Transportation Safety Board said it was investigating the incident. The National Transportation Safety Board said it was investigating the incident.

# Rubio to testify in trial of former roommate accused of secretly lobbying for Venezuela

MIAMI, MAR 23

The federal trial of a former Miami congressman accused of secretly lobbying for Venezuela's government during the first Trump administration begins Monday with Secretary of State Marco Rubio set to testify over his interactions with his old friend. Prosecutors allege David Rivera was a hired gun for former President Nicolás Maduro, leveraging Republican connections from his time in Congress to push the White House to abandon its hard line on Venezuela's socialist government. Rivera, who at one time had been Rubio's roommate in Florida, allegedly persuaded then Foreign Minister Delcy Rodríguez — now Venezuela's acting president — to award him a \$50 million lobbying contract to be paid by state oil company PDVSA. As part of the alleged foreign influence campaign, prosecutors say Rivera was aided by Texas Republican Rep. Pete Sessions and a convicted Cali cartel associate as he



sought meetings with the White House and Exxon Mobil on Maduro's behalf. The trial offers a rare glimpse into the often unseemly role Miami — long a haven for exiles, corruption and anti-communist crusaders — plays in shaping US policy in Latin America. As such, it is perhaps fitting that Rubio, Miami's most prominent politician, is set to take the stand Tuesday about his meet-

ings with Rivera while the former congressman was allegedly helping Maduro mount a charm offensive in Washington. Also likely to face scrutiny is Rodríguez, who relied on Rivera to set up meetings in New York, Caracas, Washington and Dallas in a bid to build U.S. support for normalizing relations with Venezuela — an effort that failed at the time but now appears within reach, albeit on unequal

terms, following Maduro's ouster and the ascent of his more pragmatic aide. Indictment details alleged covert lobbying and money-laundering scheme. An 11-count indictment, unsealed in 2022, charges Rivera and an associate with money laundering and failing to register as a foreign agent. Prosecutors allege that to hide their work, Rivera set up an encrypted chat group called MIA — for Miami — with his main conduit to the Maduro government: Venezuelan media tycoon Raúl Gorrin, who was subsequently charged in the U.S. with bribing top Venezuelan officials.

Members of the group used playful code words to discuss their activities: Maduro was the "bus driver," Sessions "Sombbrero," and millions of dollars "melons," according to prosecutors. Rivera, 60, denies wrongdoing. His attorneys counter that his one-man firm, Interamerican Consulting, was hired by an American subsidiary of Venezuela's state-owned oil company — not PDVSA.

# Global shares decline as hopes dim for resolution in Iran

TOKYO, MAR 23

Global shares dipped Monday across the board, as oil prices continued to climb after US President Donald Trump's latest comments dashed hopes for an early end to the war in Iran. France's CAC 40 lost 1.5 per cent in early trading to 7,548.83, while Germany's DAX dove 2 per cent to 21,944.26. Britain's FTSE 100 fell 1.7 per cent to 9,754.80.

The US shares were set to drift lower with Dow futures down 0.5 per cent at 45,659.00. S&P 500 futures fell 0.7 per cent to 6,515.25. In Asia, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 dropped 3.5 per cent to finish at 51,515.49. In Taiwan, the Taiex shed 2.5 per cent to 32,722.50. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 0.7 per cent to 8,365.90. South Korea's

Kospi dove 6.5 per cent to 5,405.75. Hong Kong's Hang Seng slipped 3.5 per cent to 24,382.47, while the Shanghai Composite declined 3.6 per cent to 3,813.28. Trump over the weekend warned the US will "obliterate" Iran's power plants if it doesn't fully open the Strait of Hormuz within 48 hours, prompting Tehran to say it would respond to any such strike with attacks on the US and Israeli energy and infrastructure assets in the region. "Trump's ultimatum and Iran's retaliatory warnings point to a widening conflict that keeps energy disruption and market volatility elevated with no clear off-ramp in sight," said Ng Jing Wen, an analyst at Mizuho Bank in Singapore. Higher oil prices, which also shook stock markets on Friday, dashed hopes for a possi-

ble upcoming cut to interest rates by the Federal Reserve, analysts said. Before the war, traders were betting that the Fed would cut rates at least twice this year. Central banks in Europe, Japan and the United Kingdom also recently held their interest rates steady. But analysts observed that the markets were starting to react less to each of Trump's remarks, perhaps deciding the narrative for markets was being set elsewhere, not Washington, such as what Iran might do but how global economic growth could be affected by soaring energy prices. Some Asian nations, like Japan, are vulnerable to higher energy prices. In energy trading, benchmark US crude added USD 1.62 to USD 99.85 a barrel. Brent crude, the international