



Immigration News Highlights

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The KPMG team regularly monitors recent developments across the globe in the Immigration space and publishes them as Immigration News Highlights. Please find the key developments that occurred over the last week enumerated below. [Click here to find all issues of the Immigration News Highlights on the GMS Flash Alert: Immigration page.](#)

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[Americas](#)

[Asia Pacific](#)

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Americas

Canada

Suspension of Skilled Trades Stream and Return of Applications

The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) has suspended its Express Entry: Skilled Trades Stream following a review that uncovered systemic compliance issues, including widespread misrepresentation and fraud in eligibility criteria. These vulnerabilities compromise the program's ability to address Ontario's labor market needs within its limited nomination quota. Consequently, all pending applications will be returned with fees refunded, as per Ontario Regulation 421/17. Interested candidates may submit a new Expression of Interest under other eligible OINP streams.

[Read more](#)

Canada reports longest visitor visa processing time for Indian applicants

On 11 November 2025, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada confirmed that Indian nationals face an average wait of 99 days for visitor visas—the highest among major source countries. Super Visa applications for parents and grandparents take about 169 days. The delays reflect record application volumes and country-specific screening requirements.

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United States

[Adjustment of Status Filing Charts as published in the Visa Bulletin](#)

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has announced that for November and December 2025, applicants in both family-sponsored and employment-based preference categories must use the Dates for Filing chart from the Department of State Visa Bulletin when submitting adjustment of status applications. USCIS designates which chart to use monthly, based on visa availability, and updates its guidance within a week of DOS publishing the Visa Bulletin. If a category is “current” or has a later cutoff date on the Final Action Dates chart, applicants may file using that chart during the applicable month.

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Asia Pacific

Australia

[Australia introduces Ministerial Direction 115 to regulate student visa processing](#)

The Australian government has implemented Ministerial Direction 115 (MD 115) for offshore student visa applications (Subclass 500), effective from 14 November 2025. The directive introduces a three-tier processing system based on institutions' enrolment levels: fast-track for those below 80 percent, standard for up to 115 percent, and slower processing for providers exceeding 115 percent. The measure aims to manage international student growth, promote regional education opportunities, and reward compliance with enrolment targets.

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China

[China to Introduce Digital Arrival Card for International Travelers](#)

China's National Immigration Administration to launch an online arrival card system for international travelers starting 20 November 2025, allowing entry details to be submitted via the official website, service platform, NIA 12367 app, and WeChat/Alipay mini programs. Travelers unable to complete the form in advance can submit information at ports of entry using QR codes, smart devices, or paper cards. Exemptions apply to holders of China's Foreign Permanent Resident ID, certain Hong Kong/Macao permits, group visa travelers, 24-hour direct transits, cruise passengers, fast-lane entrants, and foreign transport staff.

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Egypt

[Authorities Email e-Visa Approval Certificates Amid Portal Malfunctions](#)

On 17 November 2025, Egyptian authorities began emailing official approval certificates for e-Visa applications due to ongoing technical issues with the visa portal. This temporary measure allows travelers to proceed with boarding and entry checks despite being unable to download approved visas online. Applicants are advised to monitor their inbox for updates, as no timeline has been announced for restoring full portal functionality.

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Iran

[Iran announces suspension of visa-free entry for Indian nationals](#)

On 17 November 2025, the Iranian government announced that Indian citizens will no longer be eligible for visa-free entry or transit through Iran starting 22 November 2025. All travelers must obtain a visa prior to departure, including those using Iranian airports for onward transit. India's Ministry of External Affairs issued advisories warning of job fraud and kidnapping risks linked to misuse of the previous visa waiver. Airlines have been instructed to verify visa compliance before boarding to prevent disruptions.

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Malaysia

[Malaysia introduces new overstay fines for Employment and Dependent Pass holders](#)

Malaysia implemented the Overstay Management Program introducing tiered fines for foreign nationals holding Employment Passes and Dependent Passes who overstay up to 90 days. The fines range from MYR30 per day for 1–30 days, MYR1,000 for 31–60 days, and MYR2,000 for 61–90 days, replacing the previous automatic referral to the Immigration Enforcement Division for overstays beyond 30 days. Additionally, the Special Pass fee for non-Overstay Investigation Paper cases has increased from MYR100 to MYR200 per application. Overstays exceeding 90 days, repeat offenses, and cases involving Special Pass holders or individuals on the Suspect List will continue to require in-person processing at immigration offices.

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New Zealand

[New Zealand joins international partners to fight visa fraud](#)

On 17 November 2025, Immigration New Zealand announced its participation in the Five Country Ministerial 'Fighting Visa Fraud' campaign during International Fraud Awareness Week (16 to 22 November 2025). The initiative, involving New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, aims to raise awareness and protect visa applicants from scams. Applicants are encouraged to use official websites and report suspicious activity.

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Oman

[Oman extends foreign residency card validity to 10 years](#)

Oman has extended the validity of foreign residency cards from three to ten years, aiming to provide greater stability for expatriates and reduce administrative burdens. The updated regulations set issuance and renewal fees at five Omani rials per year, with replacement cards costing 20 rials. The reforms also expand cultural visa provisions to include spouses and first-degree relatives and follow recent citizenship grants under the revised nationality law. These changes reinforce Oman's strategy to attract and retain international professionals while simplifying compliance requirements.

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Saudi Arabia

[Saudi Arabia introduces free 96-hour stopover visa enabling Umrah during transit](#)

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed the availability of a free 96-hour stopover visa for international travelers transiting through the Kingdom. Effective since early 2023, the visa allows passengers flying with Saudia or Flynas to perform Umrah and visit Makkah and

Madinah without applying for a traditional Umrah visa. Travelers must register on the Nusuk platform to schedule appointments for religious rites. The visa is issued instantly during flight booking and includes a mandatory insurance fee. This initiative aligns with Vision 2030 objectives to attract 100 million tourists annually and strengthen Saudi Arabia's position as a global travel hub.

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Europe and Africa

Denmark

[International Recruitment and Integration \(SIRI\) updates practice on early first-time residence applications](#)

The Danish Agency for SIRI announced a change in its practice following a ruling by the Immigration Appeals Board on 18 June 2025. First-time residence and work permit applications will no longer be refused solely because they were submitted more than six months before the planned start of residence. Applicants previously refused for this reason may request to have their cases resumed and fees refunded, provided the application is not older than three years. Requests must be submitted via SIRI's contact form with relevant case details and payment receipts.

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South Africa

[South Africa launches Screen Talent and Global Entertainment Scheme \(STAGES\) visa for international film and creative professionals](#)

The Department of Home Affairs has gazetted the STAGES, a landmark visa reform aimed at positioning South Africa as a premier destination for film and creative productions. STAGES introduces a fully digital platform for visa processing, reducing turnaround times to as little as 24 hours and eliminating bureaucratic delays. Eligible companies can submit expressions of interest via the Trusted Tour Operator Scheme Portal, with governance agreements required for participation. This initiative reflects Home Affairs' commitment to digital transformation and economic growth, ensuring predictable, efficient visa processes for the global creative industry.

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United Kingdom

[UK conducts first facial recognition trial for passport-free immigration at Manchester airport](#)

The UK has launched a trial of a contactless border system at Manchester Airport, allowing British passport holders to enter without presenting a physical passport. Using facial recognition technology integrated with existing e-gates, the system verifies travelers against a secure database, significantly reducing processing times. The three-week pilot marks a step toward modernizing border control, with plans to expand e-gates across airports and ports. This initiative aims to deliver faster, more efficient immigration clearance while maintaining security standards.

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