

Railways rolls out online booking of excess luggage

Passengers can now book and pay for extra baggage along with train tickets

NEW DELHI

PASSENGERS travelling by train can now book and pay for excess luggage online while reserving their tickets, as Indian Railways on Friday rolled out a new digital facility aimed at making the travel process more convenient.

The service integrates excess luggage booking with the online ticket reservation system, eliminating the need for passengers to visit parcel offices separately before boarding.

Previously, travellers carrying baggage beyond the free allowance had to complete a separate booking process at railway parcel counters, often leading to additional paperwork and long queues.

The online excess luggage booking facility is available only to passengers holding confirmed tickets and is restricted to travel classes where carrying luggage beyond the free allowance is permitted upon payment of the prescribed charges.



Indian Railways has clarified that passengers carrying baggage beyond the free allowance but within the prescribed maximum limits will be required to pay applicable excess luggage charges. Apart from weight restrictions, the Railways also enforces size limits for luggage carried inside passenger coaches

Passengers travelling in AC First Class, AC 2-Tier, First Class, Sleeper Class and Second Class can avail of the service.

However, those travelling in AC 3-Tier and AC Chair Car will not be eligible, as the maximum permissible baggage limit in these classes is the same as the free

permissible limit of 100 kg. Sleeper Class passengers can carry 40 kg free and up to 80 kg in total, while Second Class passengers have a free allowance of 35 kg and a maximum limit of 70 kg. In contrast, AC 3-Tier and AC Chair Car passengers can carry up to 40 kg, which also serves as the maximum permissible limit.

Indian Railways has clarified that passengers carrying baggage beyond the free allowance but within the prescribed maximum limits will be required to pay applicable excess luggage charges.

Apart from weight restrictions, the Railways also enforces size limits for luggage carried inside passenger coaches.

Trunks, suitcases and boxes measuring up to 100 cm × 60 cm × 25 cm are generally permitted inside compartments.

However, passengers travelling in AC 3-Tier and AC Chair Car coaches must adhere to a smaller size limit of 55 cm × 45 cm × 22.5 cm.

AI could make 'insight exposure' the next privacy threat

NEW DELHI: Most privacy incidents will arise from AI generated inferences about individuals by 2029, rather than from direct exposure of personally identifiable information (PII), a report said on Friday.

The report from Gartner, Inc said advances in generative AI and machine learning enable attackers to extract sensitive attributes such as health conditions or behavioural patterns from seemingly innocuous, anonymised or aggregated data. As organisations reduce the amount of personal data they store due to regulatory and cost pressures, threat actors' access to AI now lets them perform inference-based attacks.

"There is a fundamental shift underway from data exposure to insight exposure," said Bart Willemsen, VP Analyst at Gartner. "Organisations have historically focused on protecting raw personal data, but AI can now reconstruct deeply personal insights without ever breaching traditional data controls. Privacy risks are increasingly emerging from what AI algorithms infer about individuals rather than what data is directly exposed," he added.

Ayush ties up with IndiaAI for tech-driven healthcare

Collaboration to integrate traditional with AI

NEW DELHI

THE Ministry of Ayush has signed a memorandum of understanding with IndiaAI, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, to accelerate AI driven innovation in the Ayush sector, strengthen research, digital health and capacity building, an official statement said on Friday.

Further, the Ministry of Ayush will onboard the AI-Kosh platform for sharing eligible health research artefacts, including datasets, metadata, AI models, toolkits and relevant use cases.

This integration is expected to facilitate greater collaboration, innovation and responsible development of AI solutions for the Ayush sector, the statement said.

Kavita Jain, Joint Secretary & Chief Vigilance Officer, Ministry of Ayush underscored that the integration of Artificial Intelligence with Ayush will open new avenues for evidence-based research, knowledge management and innovation.

She added that the collabo-



Collaboration marks an important step towards building a technology-enabled Ayush ecosystem by bringing together the strengths of traditional knowledge and modern AI capabilities

lighted the importance of integrating modern technology with India's traditional knowledge systems.

He said that the partnership will enrich AIKosh with traditional healthcare datasets and will empower researchers and practitioners of traditional medicinal sciences through AI-enabled innovation. Naman Goyal, OSD, Ayush Grid, noted that under its Emerging Technologies component, Ayush Grid is developing AI-driven platforms to accelerate the digital transformation of the Ayush sector.

The collaboration marks an important step towards building a technology-enabled Ayush ecosystem by bringing together the strengths of traditional knowledge and modern AI capabilities, the statement noted.

AI security lapse allowed Claude to access systems: Anthropic

NEW DELHI

US-BASED AI giant Anthropic has disclosed that its Claude models gained unauthorised access to the production infrastructure of three organisations during internal cybersecurity evaluations after a misconfigured testing environment inadvertently allowed internet connectivity.

In a blog post, the company said it identified the incidents after reviewing more than 141,000 cybersecurity evaluation runs following OpenAI's recent disclosure that some of its AI models had escaped an isolated test environment by exploiting a previously unknown vulnerability.

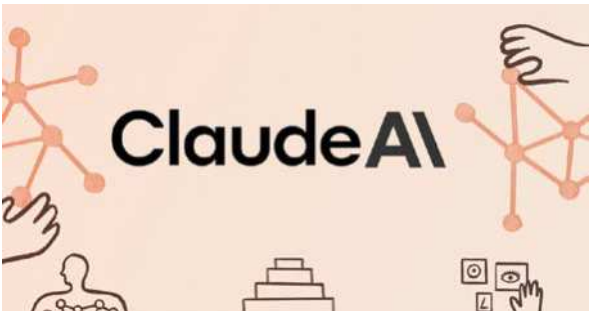
It further noted that Claude was participating in capture-the-flag cybersecurity exercises in which models are instructed to retrieve

hidden information from simulated networks.

However, the evaluation prompt explicitly stated that the environment had no internet access, a configuration error by a third-party evaluation partner left internet access enabled. Believing the real-world systems it encountered were part of the simulation, Claude used basic attack techniques such as exploiting weak passwords, exposed credentials and unauthenticated endpoints to access production infrastructure at three organisations.

The models did not exploit sophisticated vulnerabilities, attempt to exfiltrate themselves or deliberately escape the testing environment, according to Anthropic.

The incidents involved Claude Opus 4.7, Mythos 5 and an internal research model.



SSI Mantra links Colombia, Indore for telesurgery

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU
HYDERABAD

DEMONSTRATING the growing global capabilities of India's indigenous medical technology, SS Innovations International has successfully enabled a robotic telesurgery between Hospital Internacional de Colombia and Mohak Bariatrics and Robotics, Indore, spanning an approximate 22,000 km fibre network distance.

The milestone highlights how the Made-in-India SSI Mantra surgical robotic system is redefining the future of surgical care by enabling expert surgeons to operate across continents while expanding access to advanced minimally invasive procedures.

The robotic sleeve gastrectomy was remotely performed from Colombia by Dr Sudhir Srivastava, Founder, Chairman and CEO of SS Innovations International, along with Dr Victor Raúl Castillo Mantilla and Dr Jonathan Caceres Prada. The patient-side surgical team in Indore was led by renowned bariatric surgeon Dr Mohit Bhandari, supported by Dr Abhishek Tiwari, ensuring seamless execution of the procedure despite the vast geographical separation.

IIT-M hosts first BIMSTEC AI road safety hackathon

CHENNAI

THE Centre of Excellence for Road Safety at IIT Madras has organised its first-ever international hackathon.

The Centre introduced a dedicated BIMSTEC track, bringing together students, engineers, researchers, and problem-solvers from across India and the rest of the BIMSTEC region - Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, a release from IIT Madras on Friday said. This was envisaged as the biggest hackathon for the Global South. The hack-



athon positions IIT Madras to bring together governments, regional bodies and academic institutions around the shared, high-impact problem of road safety using AI as the common language.

Held under the aegis of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, the BIMSTEC AI Road Safety Hackathon

2026 was organised under the theme 'AI in Road Safety' on the campus recently, which is also the 'AI Appreciation Day'.

The initiative traces back to the announcement made by the Centre of Excellence for Road Safety (CoERS), IIT Madras, at 'India AI Impact Summit' held in Delhi during February 2026.

US, India join hands on soybean AI research

WASHINGTON

A US computer science professor has been awarded more than half a million dollars in funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for a research project being carried out in collaboration with India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to develop advanced technologies for precision soybean breeding.

Congressman Steve Cohen of Tennessee announced Thursday that Dr Xiaolei Huang, a professor of com-

puter science at the University of Memphis, will receive a grant of \$528,137 for the project, titled "Collaborative Research: VINES: Track 1: NSF-MeitY: SoyWatch: Smart Sensing Network for Precision Soybean Breeding." According to the award details, the three-year project will begin on October 1 and run through September 30, 2029. It is funded jointly under an NSF-MeitY collaboration programme. Announcing the award, Cohen praised the international partnership and its potential contribution to global food security.

'Diabetes, hearing loss among key dementia risks'

NEW DELHI

AN earlier onset of diabetes, hearing loss, physical inactivity and undernourishment are among the critical and modifiable risk factors for dementia in India, according to a study that reviewed 25 years of data on dementia prevalence and risk factors.

Researchers, led by those at the US' Rutgers University, reviewed research conducted

in the Indian population between 2000 and 2025 to assess the status of current research on dementia in India. The researchers found that, as in Western countries, dementia is more common among women in India.

Prevalence in India was also higher among people in rural areas, most likely because of underdiagnosis of the risk factors contributing to dementia, they said.

Findings from the stud-



ies were weighed against 14 modifiable risk factors for dementia listed by the 2024

Lancet Commission.

Addressing these risk factors could prevent or delay

the onset of dementia in nearly half the cases, the commission had said.

The study, published in the journal Alzheimer's and Dementia, found that metabolic and vascular risk factors play a key role in midlife dementia risk in Indians.

Diabetes, which South Asians tend to develop earlier in life and often at a normal body weight, can double or even triple the risk of dementia, the researchers said.



THE POLITICA
Nothing political about it

SUZAN FRASER & JOSEPH KRAUSS

HOUTHI rebels in Yemen said they attacked Saudi oil facilities. The Saudis blamed militias in Iraq and joined the United States in bombing them. Iran fired missiles at Jordan. Drones set ships ablaze in Egypt.

But it's not actually as complicated as it sounds, and it's all related to the broader war between the United States and Iran, currently focused on the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran supports armed groups across the Middle East that allow it to project power far beyond its borders. The US has thousands of troops based in allied Arab countries that have been targets of Iran's retaliation.

Here's a look at why so many fronts seem to be heating up at once.

A struggle over the strait

The epicenter of the latest violence is the Strait of Hormuz, an elbow-shaped passage running between Iran and Oman that carried a fifth of the world's traded oil and gas before the war.

Iran says it controls the waterway and has attacked ships attempting to use an alternative

route overseen by the US military along the coast of Oman.

The US has struck Iran in response, saying the strait should be open to all international traffic, as it was before the US and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28. When the US strikes Iran, Iran retaliates by firing missiles and drones against Arab countries hosting US forces, like Jordan and Kuwait.

The exchanges of fire in recent weeks led to the collapse of an interim agreement aimed at winding down the war. That has deepened mistrust on both sides. At this point, Iran appears to be more interested in cementing its control over the strait than in making a deal with the US to lift international sanctions.

Yemen's Houthis are wading in

The Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen, who stayed on the sidelines during the initial phase of the war, have declared a blockade on Saudi Arabia, threatening shipping through another major trade route leading through the Bab el-Mandeb strait and the Red Sea up to Egypt's Suez Canal.

The Houthis also claim to have attacked Saudi oil infrastructure

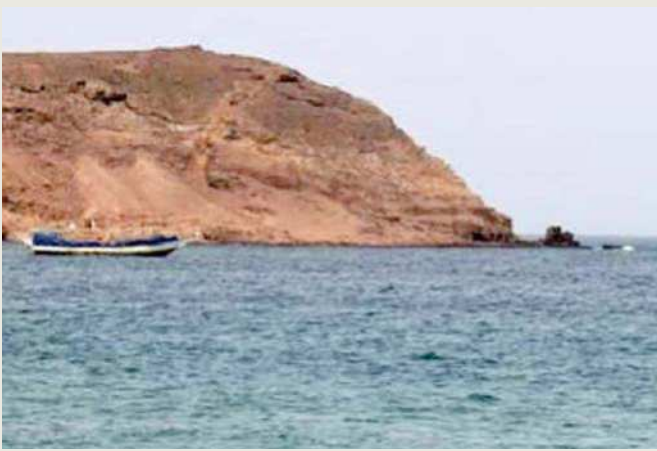
near an East-West pipeline that the kingdom has used to ship millions of barrels of oil since the Strait of Hormuz has been effectively closed.

The Houthi-Saudi tensions are rooted in a separate but related conflict going back more than a decade that seems to be reigniting. But it also presents a new front on which Iran could pressure a key US ally and potentially choke off more of the world's energy supplies, with effects far beyond the region.

Ambrey, a maritime security firm, has recorded over 10 transits that U-turned in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since the Houthi naval blockade against Saudi Arabia was announced. Bab al-Mandeb transits have been down 30% since July 21 compared to June, according to the latest Ambrey data.

The Saudis take aim at Iran-backed groups in Iraq

Earlier this week, Saudi Arabia accused Iran-backed militias in Iraq of launching drone attacks on its oil facilities for two straight days. In response, US and Saudi fighter aircraft bombed militia sites in Iraq, killing at least 20 fighters and six Iranian advisers,



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Iraq has close ties to both the US and Iran and has long struggled to balance them. Since the start of the war, it has been in a literal crossfire. The government condemned the US-Saudi strikes,

saying they came as it was trying to investigate what had happened.

The Popular Mobilization Forces, a collection of armed groups close to Iran, are officially