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**2 hrs to 20 mins:  
New Mumbai  
bridge a boon  
for motorists**

**MUMBAI**

India's longest bridge, the 22km Atal Setu linking central Mumbai with a fast-growing commercial hub across the Arabian Sea, will open today in a ceremony by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a centre-piece of his government's infrastructure drive.

The \$2.2 billion bridge, under construction since 2016, will cut travel time between central Mumbai and the rapidly developing areas of Navi Mumbai — home to one of India's biggest ports as well as new hospitals and universities and global retail chains like IKEA — to 20 minutes from two hours, said Sanjay Mukherjee, head of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority.

Brokerage firm Jefferies estimated that the Mumbai metro area, India's financial nerve centre and home to 23.6 million people, would complete \$10 billion in projects over the 18 months to end-2024, and an additional \$60 billion over the next three to seven years.

RK Jain, who owns three industrial components factories in Navi Mumbai, says the Atal Setu bridge will help to turn the region from a "backward area" into a "premium suburb".

—Reuters

**SEE ALSO P12**

## THE TAKEAWAY

### OFFICE PET PEEVES TO WATCH OUT FOR

For starters, try not to crowd your colleagues at their desks | P8-9



## MIDDLE EAST

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## NATION

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## WORLD

**Nearly 10,000 died across the globe from Covid-19 in December | P12**

# 100,000 to be screened for diabetes

12,000 RESIDENTS ALREADY TESTED AS PART OF UAE'S YEAR-LONG CAMPAIGN

## DUBAI

BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN  
Senior Reporter

The UAE health authorities have embarked on a comprehensive initiative to screen 100,000 residents for diabetes following the successful completion of a 100-day campaign called "Show the Red Card to Diabetes."

Launched under the Government Accelerators Programme, the campaign aimed to detect type 2 diabetes early, targeting 5,000 residents and reverse pre-diabetes with lifestyle modifications. Remarkably, over 12,000 residents were screened, surpassing the initial target, and 8.9 per cent were identified as pre-diabetic, with 1.7 per cent already diabetic.

The unique national campaign utilised digital questionnaires, employing the hemoglobin A1C test instead of instant glucose tests to assess risks and guide interventions, said Dr Buthaina Bin Belaila, head of Non-communicable Disease (NCD) and Mental Health Department at

the Ministry of Health and Prevention.

She revealed that patients diagnosed as pre-diabetic and diabetic were immediately referred to clinics for follow-up and lifestyle modifications. The campaign focuses on counselling and offers third and sixth-month follow-ups at workplaces and in the community.

## Lifestyle changes

While the sixth-month follow-up will reveal the effectiveness of interventions, the campaign stresses lifestyle changes, including exercise, healthy eating, stress management and avoiding smoking and alcohol.

The Emirates Health Services and Dubai Health also announced offering lifestyle modification services to several patients diagnosed as diabetic and pre-diabetic.

The year-long national initiative now plans to extend its reach, screening 100,000 people for free through partnerships with private health care providers. The campaign's success was celebrated with a drone show and Ain Dubai light display.

**SEE ALSO P4**

# UAE declared the highest climber in passport ranking

Citizens now granted visa-free entry to staggering 183 destinations

## DUBAI

BY LEKSHMY PAVITHRAN  
Assistant Online Editor

The UAE has been declared the fastest climber over the past decade in the rankings of world's most powerful passport.

The country jumped to 11th place and offering access to 183 destinations without a visa, adding an impressive 106 destinations to its visa-free score since 2014, resulting in a massive 44-place jump in the ranking, from 55th to 11th position.

The report, published on Wednesday by Henley & Partners, a global citizenship and residence advisory firm, is based on exclusive official data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

## Six at the top

Meanwhile, an unprecedented six countries share the top spot with visa-free access to a record-breaking number of destinations on the 2024 index.

**44**

places jumped by UAE, from 55th to 11th position

Four EU nations join Singapore, Japan

For the past five years Singapore and Japan have boasted the world's most powerful travel documents, granting their citizens access to more countries without a prior visa than anyone else. This year, however, things have changed.

Four EU member states — France, Germany, Italy, and Spain — join Japan and Singapore in boasting the most powerful passports in the world, with their citizens able to visit an astonishing 194 destinations out of 227 around the globe visa-free.

Residents of France, Germany, Italy and Spain now have visa-free access to 194 of 227 destinations, three more than last year.

**SEE ALSO P5**

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## BUSINESS

**Will UAE travellers have to pay more for US trip? | P6**

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