

E-VISA SYSTEM

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India has a robust visa regime in place to enable lawful inward movement of foreigners including foreign tourists, professionals and skilled workforce, business persons, students etc. Government has taken a number of initiatives over the last few years to liberalize, streamline and simplify visa regime with a view to facilitate the legitimate foreign travelers while simultaneously ramping up the technological infrastructure to enhance internal security.

One significant step taken to liberalize and simplify the Indian Visa regime, especially the tourist visa regime, is the introduction of the e-Visa facility. This facility, with Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA), which was introduced in November, 2014 for nationals of 43 countries, is presently available to nationals of 172 countries for entry through 32 designated international airports and 06 major seaports. E-Visa is presently available under 13 sub-categories i.e. e-Tourist Visa, e-Business Visa, e-Medical Visa, e-Medical Attendant Visa, e-Conference Visa, e-Ayush Visa, e-Ayush Attendant Visa, e-Student Visa, e-Student X Visa, e-Transit Visa, e-Mountaineering Visa, e-Film Visa and e-Entry (X-1) Visa.

Processing of e-visa is totally on the online platform. A foreigner can apply for e-visa from anywhere. Introduction of e-visa has helped in providing hassle-free entry to foreigners into India for legitimate purposes like tourism, business and medical purposes etc.

A 30 days with double entry e-tourist Visa with visa fee of US \$25 was launched in 2019. To encourage off-season (April - June) tourists, visa fee of US \$25 was reduced to US \$10 during this lean period.

Liberalization and simplification of the e-visa regime, including the visa fee waivers or special visa categories for any specific tourist groups, is an ongoing process which is done after taking into consideration the issues of security, inbound tourism and investments, bi-lateral relations, on reciprocity-basis etc.'

This was stated by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs Shri Bandi Sanjay Kumar in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

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