

Easier e-visa for business trip to India

In a bid to make it easier for foreign nationals to visit India for business trips, the government of India has relaxed e-business visa norms. The revised rules provide for longer visa validity, continuous stay up to 180 days and multiple entries into India, among major changes. The recent revision in rules allows a validity of a maximum of one year against 60 days allowed earlier. Also, with this, 180 days of continuous stay in the country will be allowed, a statement from the Ministry of Tourism said. For stays with lesser than a 180-day period, no registration with the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (FRRO) / Foreigners Registration Officer (FRO) in India will be required, per the new rules.

The government has taken off the earlier restrictions on the number of entries under the e-business visa. E-visa can now be issued with multiple entries. Previously, there was a restriction of three applications per the calendar year. Now, e-visa can be applied for without any numbered restriction. The policy now allows visitors from 166 countries, up from 161 countries and territories earlier, with the exception of Pakistani Passport holder or Pakistani origin among others.

In a major relief, the government has also reversed its earlier policy for foreign nationals falling sick. The previous policy required visa conversion into a medical visa for the foreign nationals who fell sick on their time in India, in order to avail medical treatment. That is no longer a case. Also, Port Blair and Bhubaneswar have been added to a list of 28 airports which can be used by e-visa holders to get entry into India. The number has been increased from the previous 26 number of airports.

Earlier, to attract more FDI, and keeping in mind the increase of economic growth and earnings from export of services such as tourism, medical value travel, travel on account of business, the government had approved e-visa scheme in April of 2017.