

## **FHRAI requests restoration of e-Visa facility for the UK, Canada & other source markets to Indian government**

Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) recently submitted a representation to Mr. S Jaishankar, Union Minister of External Affairs and Mr. G Kishan Reddy, Minister of Tourism requesting the restoration of e-Visa facility for the United Kingdom (UK), Canada other source markets.

The association stated that unavailability of the facility is impacting the survival efforts of the tourism sector in the post-pandemic period. FHRAI has highlighted that non-restoration of e-Visa facility has been found to be a major reason behind the low traffic of tourists to India from these countries in the recent months.

Further, the association mentioned that prior to the suspension of e-Visas in March 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the facility was available to the nationals of 171 countries, who immensely benefitted from the facility. While the e-Visa facility has now been restored for nationals of 156 countries, the UK and Canada, among a few others continue to be left out whose nationals contribute to the maximum foreign tourist arrivals.

FHRAI has also stated that the delay and difficulty in procuring Indian visas is a big deterrent for tourists while considering their tour to India. It has been widely reported that the travellers are cancelling their bookings in large numbers especially in the UK, which in turn is affecting the Indian tourism sector adversely.

If the current situation persists, it will be a big loss for inbound tourism business and will cause further devastation to the already battered sector. With the travel and tourism sector opening up across the world, it is imperative that India too adopts tourism-friendly policies and practices to accelerate the growth and revival of the sector in the country.