



INDIA: CHANGES TO TOURIST VISA PROGRAM

The Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has released plans to expand its visa-on-arrival program to tourists from 180 countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, and Australia. The move signals a relaxation of tourist visa rules, which previously required that foreign tourists obtain a visa from an Indian Consular Post prior to travel.

This rule change does not appear to apply to business visitors or those seeking work authorization.

Under the new regulations, tourists will now be issued a visa at the port of entry in India. While the details have not yet been published on the manner of visa issuance, it is possible that applicants will be able to file their applications online prior to travel. It is not yet clear whether the visa will be issued as an electronic approval or as a visa stamp issued in the passport upon arrival in India.

The visa-on-arrival program is expected to go into effect on October 1, 2014; however, the initial rollout will begin this summer at nine (9) Indian airports, including those in Kochi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai, Trivandrum, and Goa.

Nationals of eleven (11) countries are already eligible to enter India on the visa-on-arrival program, including Japan, Singapore, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Luxembourg, Finland, New Zealand, and the Philippines. Eight (8) countries have not been included in the new visa-on-arrival list, including Pakistan, Sudan, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Iran, Iraq, Sri Lanka and Somalia.

As always, FosterQuan will continue to monitor global immigration regulations and procedures and will provide additional information in future Immigration Updates®, and on our firm's website at www.fosterquan.com.