

Bangladesh urges India to facilitate e-visas

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Dhaka has urged India to facilitate e-visas for Bangladeshi tourists.

"171 countries could apply for e-visas in 28 international airports and five cruise terminals of India. Bangladesh is not included in that list. Every year, a large number of Bangladeshi tourists visit India..." said a representative from Bangladesh during the trade policy review of India.

E-visa services are rendered online and an Electronic Travel Authorisation under the scheme is delivered in a time bound manner. In nearly 90 per cent of cases, e-visas are processed within 24 hours of the submission of application.

According to the 'India Tourism Statistics at a Glance 2020' report by the tourism ministry, with 2.6 million tourists, Bangladesh accounted for 23.6 per cent of total foreign tourist arrivals in India.

Minister of State for Home Affairs in India Nityanand Rai said e-visa facility is granted to nationals of various countries after taking into consideration, the issues of security, inbound tourism, investments, bi-lateral relations etc.

"Extension of this facility is an ongoing process. Presently, citizens of 171 countries can avail themselves of e-visa facility extended by India."

During the review, Bangladesh also raised concerns over India's new FDI policy that put restrictions on foreign investment from countries having land border with India. Though the policy is targeted towards China, Bangladesh may have become collateral damage being a neighbouring country.

"An entity of a country, which shares land border with India or where the beneficial owner of an investment into India is situated in or is a citizen of any such country, can invest only under the Government route. As a result, Bangladeshi investors face stricter investment regime compared to other investors whose countries do not share land borders with India," complained the Bangladeshi representative.