

India Reopens Doors: Tourist Visas for Chinese Nationals Resume After Five-Year Hiatus



After a five-year suspension, India will resume issuing tourist visas to Chinese citizens starting Thursday, July 24, 2025. This significant development, announced by the Indian Embassy in China on Wednesday, marks a notable step towards normalizing relations between the two Asian nations, which have been strained since the 2020 border clashes in the Galwan Valley.

The decision to reintroduce tourist visas for Chinese nationals comes as both countries seek to improve people-to-people ties and build on recent diplomatic engagements. Tourist visa services were initially halted in early 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, while restrictions for most other nationalities were eased as the pandemic subsided, tourist visas for Chinese citizens remained suspended amidst escalating bilateral tensions and trade restrictions that followed the Galwan clashes.

Chinese citizens can now apply for an Indian tourist visa by completing an online application, scheduling an appointment, and submitting their passport and other required documents in person at Indian Visa Application Centers located in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. This streamlined process aims to facilitate the return of Chinese tourists to India.

The move follows a period of cautious de-escalation and renewed dialogue between India and China. Both nations have recently agreed to resume direct air connectivity, and there have been discussions about restarting the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra, a significant pilgrimage for Indians

to Tibet. Last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping also held talks in Russia, signaling a mutual interest in stabilizing the relationship.

A spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry, Guo Jiakun, welcomed India's decision, stating, "China is ready to maintain communication and consultation with India and constantly improve the level of personal exchanges." This sentiment echoes a shared desire to foster greater interaction and understanding between the two populous nations.

The resumption of tourist visas is expected to inject new life into India's tourism sector, which saw a significant decline in international visitors, including from China, in recent years. In 2019, before the pandemic and border tensions, over 300,000 Chinese tourists visited India. While concerns over the broader border dispute and trade imbalances persist, this step signifies a pragmatic approach to rekindling cross-border exchanges and rebuilding trust. The coming months will likely reveal the extent to which this measure contributes to a broader normalization of India-China relations.