



India to Sign MoU on Easing Visa Curbs

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India will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on “revised travel arrangements” with Bangladesh to ease visa restrictions for citizens from the neighboring country.

Background

- In 2014, India had decided to relax visa restrictions for Bangladeshis above the age of 65 and below the age of 13. They were allowed five-year multiple entry visas.
- Last year India announced a five-year multiple entry visa to the 1971 war veterans from Bangladesh.
- However, Bangladesh has demanded that travel restrictions for senior citizens be eased and further concessions are given to **Muktijoddhas** – those who participated in the 1971 Liberation War.
- Citizens from 161 countries can travel to India on e-tourist visas procured online. However, this facility is not extended to Bangladesh.
- India has on several occasions raised the issue of the influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh.

E-Tourist Visa

- The E-Tourist Visa enables the prospective visitor to apply for an Indian Visa from his/her home country online without visiting the Indian Mission and also pay the visa fee online. The categories include E-Tourist, E-Business, and E-Medical.
- The E-visa facility is now available for nationals of 161 countries for entry through 24 airports as well as 3 seaports (Cochin, Goa and Mangalore).
- The new visa regime is meant to make India a more favorable tourism destination.
- It will facilitate the Make in India programme that requires multiple business visits by foreign investors.
- The scheme is also in sync with the vision of Digital India.