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Under Visa regime rationalization, main categories for Visa reduced from 13 to 09

CHENNAI – 12 Nov, 2026 Under Visa regime rationalization, main categories for Visa reduced from 13 to 09 and sub categories from 49 to 23 Indian visa regime rationalization to boost foreign tourist arrivals, enhance medical value travel and foreign student arrivals Number of fields to be filled in the application forms for all 23 visa sub-categories reduced by 65%–70%, now application process easier, faster, and more applicant-friendly Changes reduce overlap between visa categories and make framework easier to navigate for visitors, patients, students, researchers, investors and business professionals Rationalization intends to boost legitimate travel, education, healthcare and economic engagement with India through clearer, purpose-based visa options.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and guidance of Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah, the Government of India has simplified its visa regime. The step aims at making it more compact, coherent and responsive to the requirements of foreign nationals visiting India. On 27 th August, 2026, the Ministry of Home Affairs reduced the number of main visa categories from 13 to 9 and the number of sub-categories from 49 to 23. This follows the earlier rationalisation undertaken in October, 2025, when the main visa categories were reduced from 22 to 13 and sub-categories from 63 to 49. While considering the simplification of Indian Visa regime, the Government of India studied the Visa system of the developed countries and global standards.

The consolidation of similar purposes of travel is aimed at providing greater clarity and ease in identifying the appropriate visa category while facilitating legitimate foreign arrivals.

Currently e-visa is processed by electronic travel authorization under 13 sub categories. The facility of e-visa is presently available to the nationals of 172 countries.

The erstwhile Tourist Visa has been renamed Visitor Visa, reflecting a broader range of permitted purposes beyond conventional tourism. The category has been organised into two sub-categories, V-1 and V-2, so that applicants may select a visa suited to the nature and duration of their proposed visit.

V-1 Visa: In addition to other eligible visitor activities, it covers short-term activities such as business meetings, medical consultations, wellness retreats, short-duration medical treatment and short-term courses in Indian languages, music, art and craft. It is granted for 30 days with multiple entries.

V-2 Visa: Intended for longer-duration visits, with validity of 1, 5 or 10 years, as specified. It covers the activities permissible under V-1 and mountaineering. For mountaineering, a visa of six months, with multiple entries, will be granted.

By bringing a wider range of short visits under a clearly identified category, the new arrangement makes visa selection simpler for travelers who may combine leisure with business meetings, medical consultations, wellness retreats or cultural learning, short duration yoga programme. The longer-duration V-2 option provides continuity and convenience for eligible repeat visitors, while the specific mountaineering provision addresses the distinct needs of such travel.