

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.308**  
ANSWERED ON 03.02.2022

**LOW DEMAND FOR FREE TOURIST VISA**

308. SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE:

Will the Minister of **TOURISM** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that out of the 5 lakh free tourist visas announced in March 2021, only few thousand such visas could be issued;
- (b) if so, the reason for such a low demand for tourist visas to the country, in spite of them being free;
- (c) whether the low rate of vaccination in the country as a percentage of total population is a reason for tourists getting discouraged from visiting the country; and
- (d) if not, the major reasons for tourists staying away from visiting the country and the steps being planned to boost the tourism sector?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF TOURISM

(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

(a): As per the information received from the Ministry of Home Affairs, a total of 56,392 Regular Tourist Visas and 111,141 e- Tourist visas have been issued from 6th October, 2021 to 21st January, 2022.

(b) to (d): The major reasons for low demand of the tourist visas to the country are cited as under:

- i. The Tourist Visa (including e- Tourist Visa) has been issued on or after 06th October, 2021. Further, citing the Covid -19 situation across the globe and for revival of tourist in India, the Government allowed foreign nationals to enter into India for tourism purpose on e- Tourist Visa/ Tourist Visa through Chartered flight (for Group Tourism only) w.e.f 15th October,2021 and for Individual foreign nationals w.e.f 15th November,2021.
- ii. The normal flights which were to be operational from 15th December, 2021 have been discontinued citing the health related precautionary measures and guidelines/ recommendation of the Ministry of Health and Family welfare and Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), in view of the new COVID- 19 variant, Omicron.
- iii. Foreign tourists are travelling to India only on flights operational under air bubble arrangement with the countries, at present.
- iv. The main tourism source markets for India tourism are struggling with Covid variants and have restricted their travelling.

Government is hopeful that once the pandemic risk is reduced and the situation comes back to normalcy, inbound tourism will restart.

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