



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

BRITAIN AND INDIA

BUILDING A NEW VISA PARTNERSHIP

'The UK and India both stand to benefit hugely from a closer partnership – through tourism, trade and cultural exchange. As parliamentarians, we strongly believe that the first step to deepening Britain's enduring friendship with India is enhancing visa mobility. That's why we're pleased to endorse the UK-India bilateral visa agreement proposed by The Royal Commonwealth Society.'

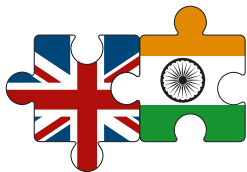
Virendra Sharma MP and Bob Blackman MP

RECOMMENDATION



A new visa partnership between the UK and India, modelled on the UK-China £89 two-year visitor visa.

HEADLINES



As Britain looks for future global opportunities, there is a clear desire to build a closer partnership with India.



France has overtaken Britain as the European destination of choice for Indian tourists, and the gap is widening.



The UK is losing its market share of Indian visitors, missing out on almost **£500m a year** and over **8,000 tourism jobs**.



Since 2016, tourists travelling between the UK and China have received a special two-year visa.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A UK-INDIA VISA PARTNERSHIP?

1 BUSINESS AND TOURISM GROWTH

3rd

largest economy
by 2028

India is on the rise. Growth is higher than 7% and they will have the world's **3rd largest economy by 2028**



India is the UK's **fourth largest source of Foreign Direct Investment**. The UK is India's 3rd largest FDI partner.

110k

UK jobs

Indian companies employ nearly **110,000** people in the UK.



Indian business visitors **spend almost three times the average** for a business traveller to the UK.

£423m

in 2016

Indian tourists spent **£423m** in the UK in 2016, supporting 8,000 jobs.



2 CULTURAL EXCHANGE



The UK is the **oldest** and India the **largest** modern democracy in the world.

1.4m
of Indian descent

Indians constitute the **largest diaspora** community in the UK.



Strong UK-India links in food, music, sport, and education.

3 COMMONWEALTH PARTNERSHIP



The Commonwealth is a modern association of countries built on **shared history, language, legal systems and values**. Closer visa partnership will enhance these soft power connections.

Globally, Indian Tourism IS BOOMING...

50m

Indian outbound tourists by 2020

Indian outbound tourism will **increase by 20% per annum** between 2017 and 2020, to **50m tourists** by the end of the decade. By 2022 this will be a £32bn market.

...BUT BRITAIN IS FAILING TO CAPITALISE:



– 2006 –
4.4%



– 2016 –
1.9%

The UK's market share of Indian outbound tourists has more than halved from 4.4% in 2006 to **1.9% in 2016**.

600,000



415,000



600,000 Indians visited France in 2016, **185,000 more than visited the UK**.



5.3%



1.73%

This is because while the number of visits to the UK by Indian nationals **fell by 1.73% in 2016**, in France it grew by 5.3%.



108th

Over the last six years, **UK visa competitiveness has plummeted** from 22nd to 108th in global rankings.

WHAT IS THE UK-CHINA VISA AGREEMENT?



Bilateral agreement introduced in **January 2016**.



Automatically gives successful visa applicants a **two-year multiple-entry visa** for the cost of a six-month visitor visa.



This **reduces two-year visa costs from £338 to just £89**, and allows travellers to make repeat visits within two years.



25%
more
visas

The UK granted **25% more visitor visas** to Chinese nationals after the policy was introduced.

CONCLUSION

There is clearly an appetite in Britain for building stronger cultural, business and diplomatic ties with India. **A new UK-India Visa Agreement, modelled on the UK-China two-year visitor visa, will enhance trade and tourism, and strengthen important business and cultural ties.** This will enable both the UK and India to capitalise on future global opportunities.

SUPPORTING PARTNERS:

