

India Streamlines Visa Policy for Chinese Tourists

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Ahead of its biggest cultural extravaganza in China, India today announced a new streamlined visa policy under which business and tourist visas will be processed within two days to encourage Chinese visitors.

The Indian Embassy has put in place an expedited timeline of two days from the date of submission of an application to issuing of business and tourists visas with immediate effect and without any extra charges, India's Ambassador to China Ashok K Kantha said during an interaction with Indian and Chinese journalists.

While over six lakh Indians visited China in 2012, hardly over a lakh Chinese visited India in the same period.

Asked to comment on the general elections in India, Kantha said while no prediction could be made about the outcome of the polls, which ever government comes to power in India will continue to attach great degree of importance to building friendly ties with China.

"I do not see any change in direction of our policy seeking close engagement and friendship with China," he said after releasing a special logo for the "Glimpses of India" festival being held this year across China.

The defence relations between the two countries are being strengthened with the dialogue between the two militaries, Kantha said.

"We have agreed on a series of exchanges to be undertaken during the course of this year culminating in the visit of Chinese defence minister to India in the second half of this year," he said, adding that the two countries will hold this year's annual military exercises in India.

The Indian naval ship INS Shivalik took part in the 65th anniversary celebrations of the Chinese navy held this week, Kantha noted.

The Glimpses of India festival will start off with a dance performance by a troupe from the famous Kalakeshtra in Chennai on May 11 here.

It would be held in 12 cities in China until early next year.

It will also showcase Bollywood dances, Indian performing arts, an exhibition of modern Indian art, Buddhist artefacts and heritage and their linkages to China, food and film festivals as well events involving eminent Indian and Chinese scholars, writers, Kantha said.

"We will have special focus on promotion of economic and commercial links and two way tourist flows," he said.

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