

Sir/Madam

The UK and India share historic and contemporary bonds of strategic, economic, cultural and people-to-people ties.

Movement between the two nations is paramount to this continued special relationship. The Indian diaspora is the largest in the UK at 1.4 million. Over 400,000 Indians visited the UK last year spending a total of £433m – with business visitors contributing £201m to this figure. However, France has overtaken Britain as Indian tourists' European destination of choice with over 500,000 visits in 2015.

In the last decade the UK's market share of India's outbound tourists has halved despite the Indian market growing at 10% each year and a burgeoning middle class. If the UK maintained its share, it would be welcoming over 800,000 Indian visitors annually - adding almost half a billion to the UK economy and creating 8,000 new jobs.

Visas are key to addressing this challenge. A country's visa regime is a statement to the world about its global vision and is, in essence, a nation's 'open for business' sign. Visa reform would support ease of doing business, make the UK more attractive to Indian leisure tourists and help reunite the diaspora with visiting family.

That is why we support a new report by the Royal Commonwealth Society which calls for the UK to extend its £87 two-year Visitor Visa to Indian nationals – the same deal offered to China in January 2016. As it stands, Indians must pay either £87 for six-months or £330 for two years.

The time for change is now. 2017 is the UK-India Year of Culture and marks the 70th anniversary of Indian Independence. Next year will see collaboration and cultural exchange in the arts, business, music and much more. A new visa settlement will ensure that celebrations start off on the right foot and position the UK as a more welcoming destination for Indian visitors.

Aviation

Tim Alderslade	Chief Executive, British Air Transport Association
Darren Caplan	CEO, Airports Operators Association
Charlie Cornish	CEO, Manchester Airport Group
John Holland-Kaye	CEO, Heathrow Airport
Paul Kehoe	CEO, Birmingham Airport
Craig Kreeger	CEO, Virgin Atlantic
Tara Naidu	Regional Manager - UK & Europe, Air India

Tourism

Ben Cowell	Director General, Historic Houses Association
Bernard Donoghue	Director, Association of Leading Visitor Attractions
Michael Hirst OBE	Chairman, Business Visits & Events Partnership
Ufi Ibrahim	CEO, British Hospitality Association
Thomas Jenkins	CEO, European Tourism Association
Umesh Majithia	Commercial Director, Golden Tours
Sir David Michels	President, Tourism Alliance
Brigid Simmonds OBE	Chief Executive, British Beer and Pub Association
Digvijay Singh	General Manager, Taj Hotel, 51 Buckingham Gate
Mr Guldeep Singh Sahni	President, Outbound Tour Operators Association of India

Baroness Jo Valentine
Sir Gary Verity
Deirdre Wells OBE

Chief Executive, London First
Chief Executive, Welcome to Yorkshire
CEO, UKinbound

Business & Academia

Chandrajit Banerjee
Lord Bilimoria
Taha Coburn-Kutay
Lord Flight
Dr. Ajay Rajan Gupta

Director General, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)
Chairman, Cobra Beer
Chairman, UK Asian Business Council
Flight & Partners
CEO, Indo-UK Institute of Health
Secretary-General, National Congress of Gujarati Organisation - UK
MD, J A Kapasi & Co Ltd
Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi
CEO, India Inc.
Executive Director, Tata Group - Europe
President, British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin

Mahendrasinh C Jadeja

Hon Jaffer Kapasi OBE
Prof Sri Ram Khanna

Manoj Ladwa
Dr David Landsman OBE
Dr Ramesh Mehta

Dr. Surender Munjal

Director, Centre for International Business, University of Leeds

Shankar Narayanan

VP & Head - UK, Tata Consultancy Services

Mr. Alpesh Patel

CEO, Praefinium Partners

Amarjit Singh

CEO, India Business Group

Mr. Ashok Verma

Chairman, Non-Resident Indian Foundation

Simon Walker

Director-General, Institute of Directors

Dr Linda Yueh

Fellow, St Edmund Hall, Oxford, Adjunct Professor, London Business School, and RCS Trustee

Arif Zaman

Executive Director, Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network

Parliamentarians

Lord Balfe

Vice-Chair, Indo-British APPG

Sir Henry Bellingham MP

Chair, Commonwealth APPG and Africa Minister 2010-12

Bob Blackman MP

Vice-Chair, Indo-British APPG

Baroness Flather

Vice-Chair, Indo-British APPG

Lord Howell

President, Royal Commonwealth Society and Commonwealth Minister 2010-12

Nigel Huddleston MP

Co-Chair, Visitor Economy APPG

Mr. Danny Kinahan MP

Vice-Chair, Visitor Economy APPG

Lord Lee of Trafford

Co-Chairman, Tourism APPG

Lord Marland

Chairman, Commonwealth Enterprise & Investment Council

Lord Popat

(Former) Chairman, Conservative Friends of India

Steve Pound MP

Vice-Chair, Indo-British APPG

Lord Rana

Commonwealth APPG member

Margaret Ritchie MP

Co-Chair, Visitor Economy APPG

Virendra Sharma MP

Chair, Indo-British All Party Parliamentary Group

Lord Sheikh

Secretary, Indo-British APPG

Dr Philippa Whitford MP

Vice-Chair, Visitor Economy APPG

Sammy Wilson MP

Vice-Chair, Visitor Economy APPG