

## **Government to extend e-conference Visa privilege to private conference delegates**

In a major step towards making MICE related travel to India less cumbersome to international conference delegates, the government has decided to extend the e-conference Visa facility to events organised by private organisations and industries as well. So far, the e-conference Visa was granted only for events organised by the government, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), etc.

The government couple of days ago announced key relaxations in the e-visa regime including a new category of e-Visa with a validity of 30 days at a fee of US\$25 and special fee of US\$10 for the lean months of April to June. The government had also extended the maximum validity of e-Visa from one year to five years.

Informing this at an industry event organised by ICPB in Delhi, Suman Billa, Joint Secretary – Tourism, Government of India said that the government is working with an action plan to make ‘Tourism happen’ in India over the next five years and private industry should make use of the favourable policy decisions and deliver on their commitments. “Going forward nothing will come for free. The industry has to show that they can deliver on their commitments,” he said.

On the GST front, Billa said that they are hopeful that the GST Council will soon take a decision to do away with the 28% slab and bring the upper slab to 18%.

With easing of e-Visa regime for individuals and conference visitors, the government is setting the ground to declare 2020 as Visit India Year. The announcement is expected to happen in October.