

Nepal To Begin Online Visa System soon

The Department of Immigration (DOI), in an effort to provide hassle free immigration services, is all set to introduce online visa application system for foreigners intending to visit Nepal.

The DOI is currently making necessary preparation to computerize visa issuance system at the TIA office and its Central Office in Kathmandu. Officials said the two offices will be linked with the internet.

The DOI announcement comes in the wake of the government plan to increase the number of inbound tourists to 1 million in the tourism year 2011.

Once the new system is put in place, a foreigner can apply for visa online and collect it upon arrival at the Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) without having to stand in queues for hours.

Immigration officials will be able to issue visa immediately as the details of the visiting guests will be available online.

At present, it takes hours to process a visa at the TIA. However, once the new system is introduced, foreigners will no longer need to fill up the application forms with lengthy details, thereby making it easier for them to acquire visa within a short time.

"Since there is no possibility of upgrading the capacity of our airport we need to think of alternative ways to help ensure early clearance at immigration for visiting tourists," said Director General Madhav Raj Regmi at the DoI. "The new measure will greatly help serve that purpose."

Regmi said they were currently studying feasibility of making payments for visa fee online. "We are also procuring Document Examination Device to help quickly process visa as the device easily helps to identify forgeries in documents and passports," said Regmi. Nepal entry visa is currently issued from eight immigration offices including Kakarbhitta, Birgunj, Tatopani, Bhairahawa, Nepalgunj, Dhangadhi and Gadda Chauki, Mahendra Nagar.

Director General Regmi said that they were planning to link these offices with internet in a phase wise manner due to financial constraints.

The DOI is also developing integrated computerized data of foreigners visiting Nepal. "There will be less chance of visa misuse once we maintain updated information about the foreigners visiting Nepal in computerized networks," he added. "This will help us tally the details in computer."