

New Zealand Simplifies Visa Process For Chinese Nationals
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WELLINGTON, Aug 2 (Bernama) -- As a first step, New Zealand will simplify the visa process for Chinese nationals by opening a joint immigration and tourism office in Shanghai following China's demand for easy visa services.

New Zealand Immigration Minister Jonathan Coleman said this office reflects New Zealand's increasing commitment to meet growth in the China market, one of the country's fastest growing tourism markets.

Annually, New Zealand rakes some USD318.49 million from Chinese tourists, China's Xinhua news agency reported, citing Coleman as saying on Tuesday.

About 131,000 Chinese visitors came to New Zealand in the year to June, an increase of 25 percent year on year, while business visitors increased by 10 percent, and Chinese students accounted for a quarter of the 90,000 international students studying in New Zealand each year.

The Immigration New Zealand (INZ) was issuing multiple entry visas for Chinese citizens as standard practice, allowing holders to enter New Zealand as many times as they like for a maximum stay of six months in total.

"This will remove a real source of frustration for Chinese who wish to visit New Zealand regularly at short notice," Coleman said, adding that the visa application form had been reduced in length, and now can be obtained in dual Chinese and English language.

Soon, INZ will establish visa application centres in Beijing, Guangzhou and Hong Kong to make the application process easier and quicker.

"What this also highlights is the important link between immigration and tourism and how better collaboration between both sectors can help boost New Zealand's tourism industry," Coleman said.

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