



Immigration News

By Vipul Joshi & Associates.

Immigration Lawyers

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BEHIND THE SCENES: MEET OUR TEAM AT VJA

Adv. Rida Fatema Moledina

Rida has been a legal professional at Vipul Joshi & Associates since July 2024, where her work focuses on immigration law and legal research. She handles immigrant petitions, CSPA matters, waiver petitions, substitution cases, citizenship cases, passport impounding matters, and mainly cases from the US immigration system and inbound Indian cases.

Beyond casework, Rida is an active researcher and writer with several publications on privacy law, data protection, and cybercrime, and has presented her work at conferences in Sri Lanka, Lucknow, Punjab, and beyond. She has also represented her college as the youngest and only delegate from Mumbai at a Global Conference in Colombo.

Rida holds a B.L.S. LL.B. from the University of Mumbai and is currently pursuing her Master's degree. She is passionate about the intersection of law, technology, and AI, interests she brings into her everyday practice.



Rebecca Pereira

Rebecca has been a part of Vipul Joshi & Associates since August 2025, where her work focuses on immigration matters relating to Canada, India, and the United Kingdom. She assists clients with Canadian and Indian immigration work and specialises in UK immigration matters, bringing an international perspective to her practice.

Rebecca is a former student of Northumbria University, UK, where she completed her BA in International Relations and Political Science. Prior to joining the firm, she worked with Citizens Advice, gaining valuable experience in assisting individuals with legal and immigration-related concerns.

She is currently preparing to qualify as a solicitor in the United Kingdom, further developing her legal knowledge and expertise. Her academic background, UK experience, and interest in immigration law allow her to bring a well-rounded and international approach to her work with clients.

Adv. Saakshi Bhosale

Saakshi Bhosale has been a part of Vipul Joshi & Associates since June 2026 and is among the firm's newest team members. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Commerce (B.Com.) and a postgraduate degree in Law (LL.B.). Since joining the firm, she has been involved in legal research, drafting, and case work relating to U.S., Canadian, and Indian immigration matters, including Child Status Protection Act (CSPA) cases, substitution of sponsors, employment visas, exit permits, FRRO compliance, and Canadian visitor visa applications.

Prior to joining the firm, she gained experience in civil litigation, with exposure to family, matrimonial, property, administrative, and contractual matters, where her work included legal research, drafting, preparation of pleadings, and assisting in court proceedings. Her background in litigation and current focus on immigration law has enabled her to develop experience in legal research, drafting, and procedural compliance.



SINGAPORE VISITOR VISA

Authored by Adv. Saakshi Bhosale

Singapore has long been one of the most popular destinations for Indian travellers, whether for holidays, business trips, weddings, family visits or short getaways. The relationship between India and Singapore also has deep historical roots. Indian traders had longstanding connections with Southeast Asia, while Singapore's development as a major port during the colonial period strengthened commercial and maritime links between India and the region. Indian migration during the 19th and early 20th centuries further contributed to Singapore's cultural and commercial landscape. These connections continue today through strong trade and investment ties, extensive air connectivity, tourism and Singapore's established Indian community. For Indian citizens travelling on ordinary passports, a Singapore entry visa is generally required before travelling when Singapore is the intended destination for tourism, social visits or business. Holders of Indian diplomatic, official or service passports are subject to different arrangements. The Singapore entry visa is a pre-entry permission that allows a traveller to travel to Singapore and seek admission; it does not itself determine the length of stay, which is decided by Singapore's immigration authorities upon arrival.

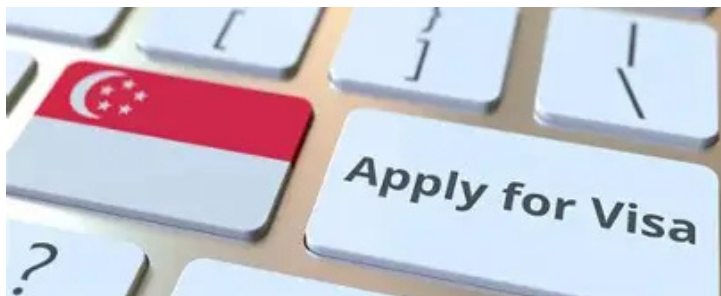


For Indian travellers, the Singapore visa application is generally submitted through an authorised visa agent or the relevant Singapore Overseas Mission, with eligible Singapore-based contacts or strategic partners able to submit applications electronically through the ICA (Immigration & Checkpoints Authority) system. Applicants are generally advised to apply within 30 days before their intended arrival. The basic application typically includes Form 14A, a recent passport-sized photograph and a copy of the passport biodata page, with the passport generally requiring at least six months' validity. Depending on the circumstances, additional supporting documents may be requested, including Form V39A, the Letter of Introduction for Visa Application (LOI). The current visa processing fee is S\$30, and applications are generally processed within three working days, although individual cases may take longer. If approved, the visa is issued electronically as an e-Visa rather than as a traditional passport sticker.

After the visa is issued, travellers should remember that visa validity and permitted length of stay are separate matters. A visa permits the traveller to seek entry into Singapore, while the actual period of stay is determined by the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) at the point of entry. If admitted, the traveller receives an electronic Visit Pass, or e-Pass, which records the permitted period of stay and the last day on which the traveller may remain in Singapore. Singapore no longer generally provides the traditional passport endorsement for a visitor's stay; instead, the Visit Pass information is provided electronically. Before arrival, foreign visitors must also generally complete the SG Arrival Card electronically within three days before arrival, including the day of arrival. The SG Arrival Card is separate from the visa and is not a visa, and ICA's official submission service is free of charge. On arrival, travellers must satisfy Singapore's immigration and entry requirements, and possession of a valid visa does not by itself guarantee admission. Travellers should therefore carry their passport and e-Visa and be prepared to provide relevant information about their trip if requested.

A Useful Option for Travellers Transiting Through Singapore -

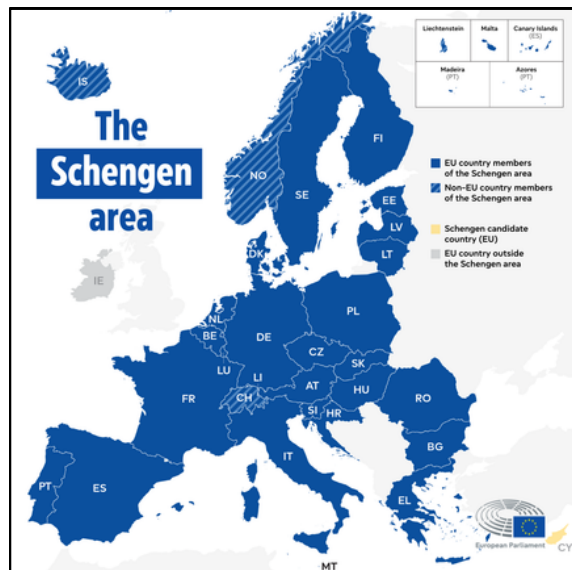
Indian nationals may also benefit from Singapore's 96-hour Visa-Free Transit Facility (VFTF) in qualifying circumstances. ICA lists Indian nationals among those who may be eligible for the VFTF, subject to the facility's specific conditions. This is designed for eligible travellers who are transiting through Singapore rather than making Singapore their final destination. Because eligibility depends on the traveller's circumstances and onward journey, it should not be treated as a general substitute for a Singapore visitor visa.



With its centuries-old connections with India and its continued importance as a hub for travel, business and family ties, Singapore remains a destination of strong interest for Indian travellers. While obtaining the visa is an important part of planning the journey, understanding the application requirements, electronic visa process and arrival formalities helps ensure a smoother experience from application to entry.

SCHENGEN VISA: YOUR GATEWAY TO EUROPE'S BORDERLESS TRAVEL

Authored by Rebecca Pereira



It is easy to imagine that the word Schengen must have something to do with a grand European institution or perhaps a centuries-old tradition. In reality, it comes from a rather unexpected place; a small village in Luxembourg.

In 1985, representatives of five European countries gathered near Schengen, a quiet village on the banks of the Moselle River, where Luxembourg meets France and Germany. They signed an agreement with a remarkably ambitious idea: what if travelling between European countries could become simpler, without the constant presence of internal border checks?

What began as an agreement signed in a small European village eventually became one of the most recognisable names in international travel. Today, the Schengen Area connects much of Europe through a system in which routine internal border controls

between participating countries have largely been removed. And for travellers from countries whose nationals require a visa, the Schengen Visa is what makes short visits across this shared travel area possible.

Remember! Not all of Europe comes under Schengen Area -

European microstates such as Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, and Vatican City, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Cyprus and other Balkan countries are not part of the Schengen agreement.

Schengen is about more than tourism

Although the Schengen Visa is often associated with holidays, the broader significance of the Schengen system lies in how it has transformed movement across much of continental Europe.

Before the removal of internal border controls, travelling between European countries could involve more frequent passport checks. Today, the Schengen framework allows participating countries to maintain a common external border while facilitating movement internally. For travellers, the result is a European journey that can feel remarkably seamless: one external border crossing can open the door to a journey across multiple countries.



Indian Travellers to keep these things in mind when applying for Schengen Visa

There is a small but important detail about Schengen visas that many travellers get wrong: you do not necessarily apply to the country you enter first. Imagine a traveller flying into France, spending two days there, and then travelling to Spain for eight days before finishing the trip in Italy. Although France is the first point of entry, Spain is the traveller's main destination because that is where most of the trip will be spent. In such a situation, the application would generally be the responsibility of Spain. But getting the right country is only the beginning.

A Schengen application should tell a clear and believable story. Your finances, itinerary and purpose of travel should all make sense together. If you are planning a holiday, demonstrate that you can comfortably afford it through liquid and readily available funds. Owning property may demonstrate your ties to your home country, but property documents alone do not show that you have the money required to actually fund your holiday.

Be transparent about your previous travel and immigration history. Previous refusals, overstays or other relevant immigration matters should not be concealed simply because they may make an application more difficult. An attempt to hide something can create a far more serious problem than the original issue itself. A visa application is ultimately an exercise in credibility. The authorities are not merely looking at your documents; they are assessing whether your purpose of travel, finances, itinerary and history form a consistent and credible picture.

A genuine application does not need a perfect story. It needs an honest one.

GLOBAL IMMIGRATION HIGHLIGHTS

- **U.S. Immigrant Visa Appointments Paused for Consular Training:**

The U.S. Department of State temporarily paused immigrant visa appointment scheduling worldwide to allow consular officers to undergo a global training initiative. The training is focused on ensuring officers are equipped to evaluate visa applicants comprehensively and consistently, particularly whether applicants are likely to become dependent on U.S. public benefits. As a result, immigrant visa appointments have been adjusted at posts worldwide, and applicants may experience difficulty obtaining new interview dates or may face delays if appointments are rescheduled.

- **Canada Closes Special Hong Kong PR Pathways:**

Canada's special permanent-residence pathways for eligible Hong Kong residents closed to new applications on August 31, 2026. These temporary pathways, introduced to provide eligible Hong Kong nationals with Canadian education or work experience an additional route to permanent residence, have now reached their scheduled closure. IRCC will continue processing applications submitted on or before the deadline, while eligible applicants can continue to access the applicable open-work-permit arrangements during processing.

- **Public Charge Bond Introduced for Certain Immigrant Visa Applicants:**

Beginning August 5, 2026, the Department of State began using a Public Charge Bond procedure on a pilot basis for selected immigrant visa applicants. The measure gives consular officers an additional mechanism in cases involving concerns that an applicant may become a public charge under INA §212(a) (4). Instead of automatically denying every such case, an eligible applicant may be permitted to overcome the public-charge issue through an approved bond. The bond amount is determined individually by the consular officer based on the totality of the circumstances.

- **Singapore Expands Work-Permit Occupations to Address Labour Shortages:**

Singapore's Ministry of Manpower announced that from September 2026, the Non-Traditional Source Occupation List will be expanded by eight occupations across the social-services, food-services and air-transport sectors. The change allows employers to recruit eligible non-PMET workers from a wider range of foreign-worker sources for occupations where attracting local workers has been more difficult.

- **New Form I-864 Introduces Credit-Report Verification:**

USCIS introduced a revised Form I-864, Affidavit of Support, effective August 31, 2026. The new form authorizes USCIS to obtain information from consumer reporting agencies as part of evaluating the sponsor's financial ability to support the intending immigrant. This means sponsors who have placed a security or credit freeze on their consumer reports may need to lift the freeze so USCIS can access the relevant information. The change is intended to provide USCIS with additional information when assessing whether the sponsor satisfies the financial support requirements.

- **Ireland Tightens Family Reunification Rules for Non-EEA Nationals:**

Ireland has introduced amendments to its Non-EEA Family Reunification Policy, increasing the financial requirements for certain sponsors and adding stricter accommodation and support conditions. Irish citizens sponsoring spouses or children must now demonstrate gross income of more than €75,000 over the previous three years, compared with the previous €40,000 threshold. Certain employment-permit holders must also provide evidence that they can accommodate their joining family members. For people granted international protection, the revised rules introduce a two-year waiting period before they can generally apply for family reunification, along with additional financial and accommodation requirements. The changes are intended to ensure that sponsors have sufficient resources to support their family members and that family reunification does not place an undue burden on the Irish State.