

CHINESE CAPITAL CONTEMPLATES VISA FREE STAY FOR FOREIGNERS



Foreign visitors who wish to visit and stay in Beijing for less than three days may in future no longer require to apply for a visa. Recently, the official China daily newspaper reported that authorities in the Chinese capital were mulling over the idea of waiving visa requirements. According to them, this move will attract more international tourists and also signify that Beijing is open to

the world.

There are similar waivers in Shanghai and Hainan islands. In Shanghai, visitors can stay for up to 48 hours without visas whereas tour groups can stay for up to three weeks in Hainan Island without a visa.

This announcement comes after the Chinese capital began a crack down on illegal foreigners working in the city amid heated debate on the behavior of foreigners who live in China.

The Chinese tourist academy international tourism development institute director, Jiang Yiyi told the official China daily newspaper that this move to waiver visa requirements would boost tourism and would not in any way result in a rise of illegal residents.

There has been a 100 day campaign to clean out non Chinese working or living in the city illegally. This campaign was launched in the beginning of this month by the Beijing Public Security Bureau. Until the end of August, all non Chinese in Beijing are required to carry on them their visa, valid passport and residence permits.

China has transformed itself from a hardship posting country in little more than a decade to a place where many young people flock to pursue their careers and for job opportunities as a result of the country's economic boom.

However, it is difficult to obtain work visas and most foreigners rely on their tourist visas hence have to leave the country after some months to get it renewed.

Chinese authorities have been relaxed about this practice but have in recent weeks come under scrutiny after an online video of a Chinese woman being sexually assaulted by a foreign man. This video triggered wide spread condemnation and outrage in China.

The Beijing police were later to reveal that the man in the footage was a British national on a tourist visa.

Hong Lei, the foreign ministry spokesman said on Friday that any legitimate interest and rights of foreigners visiting China would be protected and that there was no "anti-foreigner trend" in China.

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