

PHOTO: REUTERS



Germany raises visa quota for skilled Indians by 4.5x to 90K

Scholz pushes early EU FTA; Modi says right time to join India growth story

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Germany on Friday increased the number of annual visas for skilled Indians to 90,000 — 4.5 times the current quota of 20,000 — as the two nations sought to deepen ties during the visit of German chancellor Olaf Scholz.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the move would further boost Germany's economic growth. He also invited German businesses to invest

in the country, saying there was no better place for investment than India and this was the right time to join its growth story.

“Two of the world's leading economies...Together we can become a force for global good, and the Focus on India document provides a blueprint for this. In this, Germany's holistic approach and commitment to pursuing the strategic partnership are clearly evident,” Modi said at the 18th Asia-Pacific Conference of German Businesses in New Delhi. The conference was also attended by Scholz, who is on a three-day visit

to India.

Scholz said Germany was pushing for an early conclusion to negotiations for a free trade agreement between India and the European Union. “I am sure if we both work on this together, this could happen in months rather than years,” he said.

The German Chancellor called for further diversification of the nation's trade. “We must avoid one-sided dependencies, particularly in areas of strategic importance — critical raw materials and certain technologies, for instance.”

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**NO TRADE PACT IF
EU INSISTS ON
OPENING UP
DAIRY BIZ: GOYAL**

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◀ **German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (left) with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Friday**

Scholz backs India's efforts for lasting and fair peace in Ukraine

Later at a joint briefing with the Prime Minister, Scholz said he explicitly supported that India “works for a lasting and fair peace in Ukraine”.

Modi said the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia were a matter of concern and India was ready to make every possible contribution for restoration of peace. “India has always been of the view that war cannot be a solution to problems. India is ready to make every possible contribution for the restoration of peace,” Modi said after the 7th Inter-Governmental

Consultations with the visiting German Chancellor.

Friday's agreement with Germany is India's first one under the G20 ‘Skills-based migration pathways’ framework accepted during last year's meet in New Delhi, and would help the Indian workforce move into non-

COMING TOGETHER

Agreements

- Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) in Criminal Matters
- Agreement on the Exchange and Mutual Protection of Classified Information

Joint declarations of intent

- Employment and Labour
- Research and Development on Advanced Materials

traditional sectors like teaching, nursing and manufacturing. According to estimates, Indian skilled workers in Germany have grown in numbers in recent years, with close to 137,000 in occupations of skill, sources told Business Standard recently.

- Indo-German Green Urban Mobility Partnership for All

Documents

- Indo-German Green Hydrogen Road Map
- Road Map on Innovation and Technology

MoUs

- MoU on cooperation in Skill Development and Vocational Education and Training

Germany is grappling with a falling working age population and a relatively untrained workforce in new and emerging technologies. It granted 80,000 work visas in the first six months of 2024, of which half were for skilled labour. The German Economic Institute, a major

economic think tank, had last year pointed out the country was facing a workforce shortage and noted that 570,000 jobs remained unfilled in 2023.

The latest announcement of the visa cap being raised for Indians is part of Germany's new skilled labour mobilisation strategy. Indians were also the largest group of international students in the country with 49,483 students registered during the 2023-24 winter semester.

Following his Delhi engagements, Scholz is scheduled to travel to Goa to welcome two German naval vessels on a port call, the frigate Baden-Württemberg and the support ship Frankfurt am Main as part of Germany's Indo-Pacific deployment. This is his third trip to India since assuming office in 2021.

(With inputs from agencies)